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Anime & Manga Monthly

ANIMERICA

March, 1993

Vol. 1, No. 1

Anime Feature

Mobile Suit Gundam 0083

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Yoshiyuki Tomino



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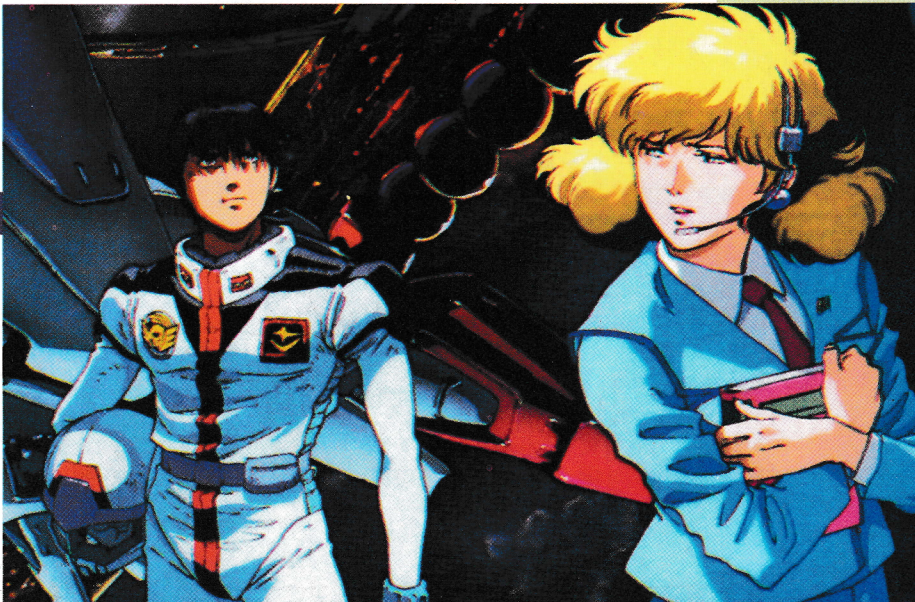
In the 21st century, mankind lives on two planets. Following the collision of an ice asteroid, massive terraforming has made the planet Venus capable of supporting life. People from Earth have colonized the formerly hostile world and thrived for four generations. But they brought with them the darkest side of their humanity—Venus is about to become hostile again.

Hiro Seno, a hotshot motorcycle jockey on a race team, is witness to the first strike on his country, Aphrodia, by the opposing nation of Ishtar. Huge battletanks and warplanes quickly lay waste to his city, and only those with wit and strength survive the attack. The Aphrodian army is quick to mobilize and retaliate...and despite his opposition to warfare, Hiro soon finds himself on the front lines fighting for his very life!

Meanwhile, Susan Somers, a feisty journalist visiting from Earth, is caught in the whirlwind of political intrigue and plunged into espionage bringing her face-to-face with the deadly leader of Ishtar itself.

The Venus Wars is the story of young people caught up in devastating events. A dark, tense backdrop is artfully combined with rich design and state of the art animation directed by Yoshikazu Yasuhiko, one of Japan's foremost creators of popular animation and comics. One of the minds behind Japan's famous *Gundam* and *Dirty Pair*, "Yas" has given his fans one breathtaking adventure after another...and *The Venus Wars* is no exception!





FEATURE ARTICLE

Mobile Suit Gundam 0083, "Stardust Memory"

With a current total of three television series, two OAV series, six movies and numerous manga and novel adaptations, *Mobile Suit Gundam* has become an industry in itself. Takayuki Karahashi takes a look at one of the most influential series of the decade.

The ANIMERICA Interview

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FROM THE EDITOR

I Was a Teenaged (—uh, okay, a twentysomething) Anime Voice-Actor

Hello, and welcome to the first regular issue of ANIMERICA. Many of you have written to tell us how much you liked our premiere issue. Thank you! As editor, I couldn't be more pleased about being a part of America's first (and only!) monthly anime and manga magazine.

Some of you have written via e-mail and other, more traditional routes to ask if I'm still associated with ANIMAG. I am. But because ANIMAG's publication schedule is arcanelly dependent upon the tightness of the leather pants as worn by AnimEigo's Michael House at last year's Anime Expo, the amount of anime in-jokes in a standard *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode, and the number of times Matthew Sweet stars in one of his own videos versus the number of half-nekkid anime babes, I've got plenty of time left over to devote to ANIMERICA.

Well, maybe not *plenty* of time. There's school. There's my freelance translation work. And then there's my moonlighting career as an anime voice-actor....

What? You mean you haven't heard? Sure, I was offered the chance to do a voice for L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions' *Macross II*, "Lovers Again" OAV series. I made my voice-acting debut in the third episode as Wendy "the idol singer" Ryder. I've appeared in later episodes as "Base Operator A" and also as one of several Marduk emulators. (First one who figures out which emulator I played and writes in the answer gets a special prize.)

I've got to be honest with you—it's weird being on the other side of the screen. I don't recognize my own voice. And I'm not sure I'm any good at this. I mean, how do actors know when they're giving a good performance? Surely they don't trust their agents. And family and friends are no help—all that unconditional support makes for mighty poor objectivity.

That's why I've decided to leave it up to you. Go find a copy of *Macross II* and tell me what you think. Really! Snip out or photocopy the ballot as provided below and drop it in the mail to me here at Viz. I'll publish the results in our May issue.

Why am I doing this? Because I've got a strange sense of humor. Because even if I quit the voice-acting business, I've still got more projects going than any one person should possibly have. But mainly because it's fun. If you guys are good enough to buy the videos, then you're good enough to have a say in who does the voices.

So c'mon and VOTE! Or I'll be forced to dub again...! See you in thirty.

Trish Ledoux

Trish Ledoux
Editor



YES!

Trish, you're an okay editor, and the truth is, as an anime voice-actor you're no worse than anyone else working for the chump change they're paying these days. GO FOR IT!!

NO!

Trish, you're an okay editor, but you make Greg Snegoff sound like Patrick Stewart in those Pontiac ads. Go sing some karaoke, get it out of your system, but GET OUT OF SHOW BIZ!!

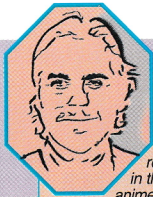
Contributors



The Fabulous Karahashi Brothers. Takayuki and Yoshiyuki, are infamous in the anime community for their deadly combination of brains and brawn. Younger brother Yoshi holds a black belt in shorinji kenpo and is a graduate student at Stanford studying chemical engineering. Taka studies mathematics at UC Berkeley and serves as spiritual advisor to the staff of ANIMAG. The Magazine of Japanese Animation, to which both brothers are frequent contributors.



Interviewer James Matsuzaki is editor of the Bay Area-based V-Max. The Anime and Manga Newsletter, president of the local CA West anime club and a fan of anime and manga since 1988. Other interests include American history and Italian Renaissance art.



As a translator and writer, San Francisco-based **Fred Schodt** is one of the most respected names in the American anime and manga industry. He is the author of *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* as well as *Inside the Robot Kingdom*, *Japan, Mechatronics and the Coming Robotopia*, both from Kodansha International, Ltd. He is currently at work on a new book which, he tells us, has nothing to do with comics or animation.



Mark Simmons, a severely obsessive infomaniac even by the lofty standards of Gundam fans, is also noted for his contributions to ANIMAG. The Magazine of Japanese Animation, and for his stunningly bad puns. (G'wan, ask him how much the Gaplant weighs.)

ANIMERICA

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Mermaid Forest

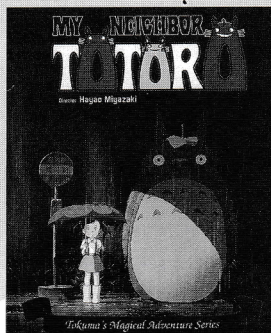
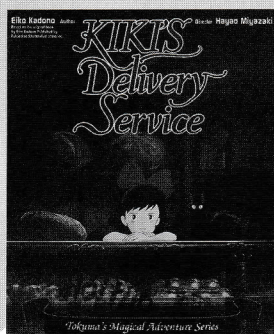
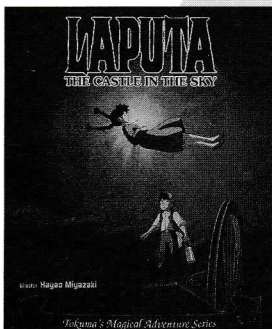
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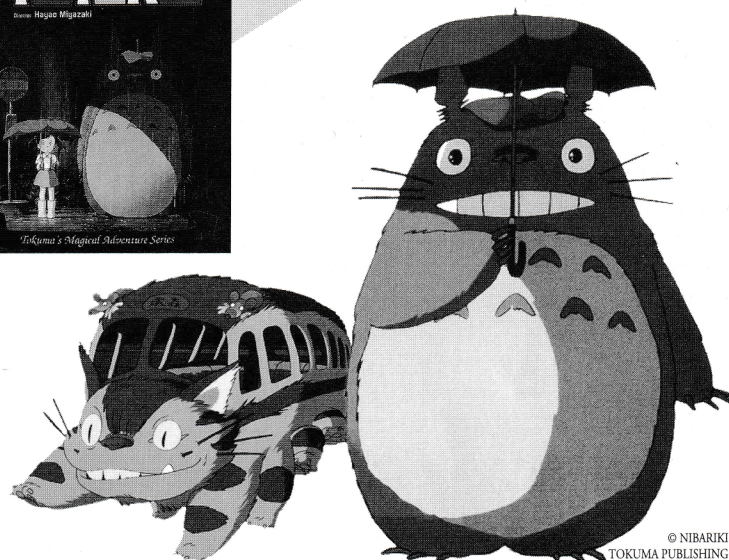
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Mobile Suit GUNDAM

Yoshiyuki Tomino's **Mobile Suit Gundam**

*This month, ANIMERICA takes a look at one of the most influential series of the decade with an exclusive interview with anime angstmeister **Yoshiyuki Tomino**; an exhaustive timeline of the Gundam universe; a behind-the-scenes report on Del Rey's novelizations by series translator **Fred Schodt**; and a close-up on the latest entry in the Gundam saga, Mobile Suit Gundam 0083, Stardust Memory.*

With a current total of three television series, two OAV series, six movies and numerous manga and novel adaptations, *Mobile Suit Gundam* has become an industry in itself. No other series has spawned as many toys, models or video games.

First broadcast in April, 1979, the original 43-episode *Mobile Suit Gundam* television series was in direct contrast to the typical "machina ex deus" so prevalent in giant robot shows of the day. By featuring an on-going story told through fully realized characters, and by portraying the realism of mass-produced robot weaponry, *Gundam* forever changed the genre.

Behind it all stood auteur Yoshiyuki Tomino, who would come to be known more for putting characters through misery than adventure; character designer and animation director Yoshikazu Yasuhiko, responsible for bringing the images to life; and mecha designer Kunio Okawara, famous for his creation of the ubiquitous Zaku.





Despite a hardcore fan following, the series which had originally been planned as 52 episodes came to an early death in early 1980 when it was canceled due to poor ratings. Vindication came remarkably early, however, when *Gundam* toys and models began to sell in record numbers. The show itself made a strong comeback in subsequent reruns, and was eventually resurrected as a movie trilogy released from 1981-1982 incorporating much of the television footage with additional new animation.

Thus went the end of an era... or so it seemed. Subsequent robot animation would readily adopt *Gundam*'s trademark continuing storyline and mass-produced humanoid robots as a norm, but even otherwise respectable imitators such as 1987's *Dragonar* lacked that certain touch which had made *Gundam* unique.

Gundam returned to the screen in 1985 with *Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam*. Compared to memories of the excitement the original *Gundam* series generated, disapproval of the new series ran high among fans. (It's ironic that this element of existentialism and human angst so unpopular among Japanese fans was one of the main causes for its popularity in the U.S.) *Zeta*'s 1986 sequel, *Gundam Double Zeta*, was a remarkably comedic departure from *Zeta*'s sturm und drang; not coincidentally, many American fans consider it to be the worst of the series.

In 1989, a fresh new team of animators joined forces to create the six-volume OAV series *Mobile Suit Gundam 0080, A War in the Pocket*. Since its revival with *Zeta*, the *Gundam* series had strayed far from its original premise and had become a sort of metaphysical melodrama where newtypes were a metaphor for universal love and deadly proficiency in combat. *War in the Pocket* went right back to the feel of the original *Gundam* and told a simple story, the story of an innocent drawn into war.

The release of this year's *Stardust Memory* OAV-cum-movie is the culmination of a saga that began over ten years ago. Tomino's reportedly working on another sequel (tentatively titled "*Gundam V*" or "*Gundam Victory*"). There may well be a new project just around the corner.

—Takayuki Karahashi

[Produced in cooperation with Sunrise, Inc.]

An Exclusive Interview with the Creator/Director of Mobile Suit Gundam

Tomino's Turning Point

After thirty years in the industry, anime angstmeister Yoshiyuki Tomino takes a moment to reflect upon the Japanese film industry, on his rôle as Gundam auteur, and on the road not traveled. A surprisingly revealing interview by James Matsuzaki, translated by Fred Schodt

Two years after the 1977 release of *Star Wars*, former film major and nouveau director Yoshiyuki Tomino debuted an animated mecha series that would forever redefine the "super-robot" genre.

Transforming mecha and L-5 colonies aside, the *Gundam* series which Tomino had created introduced a new level of human drama and even existentialism to a genre which had long since become self-parodying (at fifteen volumes, the slapstick comedy *SD* or "superdeformed" *Gundam* series may well surpass the original). More than a simple slugfest between "good" and "bad" robots, *Gundam* explores the nature of man's relationship with technology and asks questions about evolution and manifest destiny in space.

And yet, what price success? In his grudging role as anime's Dr. Frankenstein, Tomino gives the impression of a man who would gladly part with the title "Father of *Gundam*" if he could only disassociate himself from the mecha monster he's created.

Apocrypha regarding Tomino's love/hate affair abound. One oft-repeated story has him at a convention being plagued by fans about the next *Gundam* sequel. Tomino is rumored to have snatched up a nearby model, hurling it to his feet, whereupon he stomps it to pieces.

"THERE'S your *Gundam* sequel!" he is said to have cried. Another version has him stabbing it through the head with a pencil.

Other television series Tomino has been involved with include the faerie fantasy *Aura Battler Dunbine*, *Five Star Stories* precursor *Heavy Metal L-Gaim* and the wild west comedic robot drama *Combat Mecha Xabungle*, currently in release as a

thirteen-disc "perfect" laser disc collection.

Tomino is also an active writer and novelist, mostly of *Gundam*-related titles. His *Gaia Gear* novel series takes place 500 years after *Gundam's* One-Year War. The series recently ended a long serialization in *Newtype*, *The Moving Pictures Magazine* where it attracted attention for its popular character illustrations by Hiroyuki Kitazume (*Gundam Double Zeta*, *Gaiearth*). Sound effects and voice actors were employed to bring Tomino's original script to life in a nationally broadcast radio version.

ANIMERICA was fortunate to speak with the man behind the *Gundam* legend during the international anime and manga convention Anime Expo '92. Special thanks go to press liaison Peter Wong and to translator extraordinaire Fred Schodt, whose long-term association and familiarity with Tomino's work made this forthright interview possible.

A: How did you begin your career in anime?

T: You may be aware that in Japan, weekly half-hour television animation actually began one year before I graduated from college. The first series was *Tetsuwan Atom* [known in the U.S. as *Astro Boy*]. I majored in film, but when I graduated there was no chance of employment in the film industry. So I joined the *Tetsuwan Atom* production staff and went into the animation industry instead. I've probably directed more episodes of the TV series than anyone else.

A: What specific training did you receive?

T: In college, I was particularly interested in film direction. For the first two years in the program we were required to write a lot of scenarios; I'd say it gave me a basic education in script writing. I received no formal training in art, but because I knew that I wanted to become a director, I did study art and music to a certain extent.

A: What influenced your creation of the *Gundam* concept?

T: I don't think there are any animated works that have had a specific influence on the creation of the *Gundam* world. In regard to live-action, there have been quite a few that I have not only liked but been influenced by. I very much like Akira Kurosawa's films, especially the action films. I like the very quiet films of Yasuhiro Ozu. And I particularly like the U.S. film *Destination Moon*. Its depiction of space did influence me; it's where I got my feeling for space conditions from. It's very outdated now, but it was revolutionary at the time.

A: How did the space colony concept and the *Star Wars* movie influence *Gundam*?

T: The space colony concept and *Star Wars* were very much an influence on me; in fact, you could say they're the basis for the whole *Gundam* drama. I already had the story outline done when the movie was released and frankly, I felt extremely frustrated and bitter. In the United States a film like *Star Wars* could be made in live-action, whereas in Japan we were in a position—or I was in a position—where I had to make my story in robot animation...and I don't particularly like robot animation.



A: That brings up a point Mamoru Nagano (*Five Star Stories*) brought up when he visited Baycon '89. In many respects, he said, Japanese live-action films, especially in regard to sound effects and special effects, are by American standards outdated. Do you have any feelings on why this might be?

T: Yes. In Japan we have production staff and directors who are big, big admirers of special effects. But I think they regard the shooting of special effects as something too unique, too separate. That's one of the reasons that the films themselves are terrible. I think the biggest problem in the Japanese film industry is that people are not using special effects to tell a story, they're using special effects to use special effects. It's a big trend among many production companies. I would even go so far as to say that there are no live-action directors in Japan who can use special effects as an integral part of the story.

A: Going back to *Gundam*, how did you assemble the creative team that produced the first series?

T: There really is no creative "team" for *Gundam* as such. We just use whatever staff is currently available. For example, we were very lucky that on the first series we had Yoshikazu Yasuhiko (*Arion*, *Venus Wars*) as our character designer. In *Zeta* and *Double Zeta Gundam*, we had all kinds of creative staff involved. But because each series had a separate team, we weren't

able to establish the overall continuity and uniformity that we should've had throughout the story, and that's unfortunate.

A: Is that why there were such big breaks in the storylines between the various series and *Char's Counterattack*?

T: Yes, that's the biggest reason. I think another reason why there were such big gaps was because being both creator and director, I tried to do too much. Because both I and the producer felt that the element of human drama was the main reason for the success of the first series, I think I became too fixated. In *Zeta*, we emphasized this human drama element too much and wound up with a bleak ending. We overcompensated in *Double Zeta* and ended up with a comical ending. I think many of the fans tend to see the whole *Gundam* story as one unified universe, but frankly I don't think of it that way. In my own mind, from *Zeta Gundam* on, every *Gundam* story stands on its own.

A: How involved were you with the two *Gundam* OAV series, *Mobile Suit Gundam 0080, A War in the Pocket* and the recently completed *Mobile Suit Gundam 0083, Stardust Memory*?

T: I had no involvement in either project. They're produced by Sunrise and under its direct control.

A: I understand that both *Char's Counterattack* and *F-91* were origi-

nally novel series.

T: It's the other way around, actually. Whenever I write a novel, it's with the assumption that there'll also be a film. As for why, I don't know if I should say this, but...it's probably because my novels aren't strong enough to stand up on their own. I'd prefer to write the novels before the films, but the film production's got to be determined first. And since I'm involved in direction as well as production, the films always get priority and that's why the books come out later. I'd like to become a novelist, but I can't. I'm in a real dilemma.

A: In what way? Do you feel trapped by the *Gundam* concept?

T: It has absolutely nothing to do with *Gundam*. It's related to the fact that, for my generation, the print medium and novels in particular have a higher status than film. It's sort of everyone's dream, I guess, to be a novelist. But I am a TV animation director.

A: If you were a novelist, what sort of genres would you write in? Science fiction, perhaps?

T: No, I don't particularly care for science fiction.

A: In its time, *Gundam* was a revolutionary concept. In his book, *Inside the Robot Kingdom*, Fred Schodt describes a '70s anime producer who told you how to write a proper robot story. Basically, have a young hero with a big robot smash the bad guy.

T: I was involved in a lot of films like that, actually. What I wanted to do was something very different. *Gundam*, of course, was a hit. Many times after that, I tried to create shows with a different feeling. Some of these I regard as failures.

I am probably a very different creature from what you normally refer to as a creator.





Until there are no more Gundam films made, I won't be getting any work. People won't give me any work.

A: What is your relationship with Sunrise?

T: In theory, I'm a freelance director. However, because of the success of *Gundam*, I am in fact directly linked to Sunrise. In many cases, Sunrise starts the project and then they pass it on to me. Because *Gundam* is so visible within the industry, people don't really see me as a freelance director. This has actually caused quite a personal problem. Until there are no more *Gundam* films made, I won't be getting any work. People won't give me any work.

A: What are your duties on a *Gundam* project? You've already mentioned that you're the overall director. Do you work on the screenplay as well?

T: I do everything that you mentioned. Whether it's a TV series or a theatrical feature, I'm involved in either drawing the storyboards or checking them. I discuss the drawings with the animators, I draw and

check the cels—all of which takes 365 days a year. I really don't have time for other projects.

A: What would you like to be involved in if *Gundam* were terminated?

T: Nothing in particular. I'm a TV person—I've spent so much time in the industry, so many years being given the conditions under which I must create—I really don't think I could come up with anything on my own. I've been working under externally imposed conditions for thirty years. I've got all kinds of experience in being given certain conditions for planning and direction; I'm actually very confident working in an environment like that. But also, as I've said, because I've been working in this situation for thirty years, it's very difficult for me to put together my own ideas, to work from a "blank slate." In that sense, I am probably a very different creature from what you normally refer to as a creator. For example, *Gundam* is part of the giant robot genre and frankly, I don't really like the giant robot genre. But when I am put in the situation where I have to create within those parameters, I turn around and think, "Well, what can I do?" And then, if necessary, I try to introduce some new concepts. That's what happened with *Gundam*, and I think that's one of the reasons for its success. If I were left to my own devices, if I could do whatever I wanted, I probably wouldn't have the success of *Gundam*. It may not seem like a creative process, but I've recently begun to realize that as a creative method it is legitimate.

If I were left to my own devices, if I could do whatever I wanted, I probably wouldn't have the success of Gundam

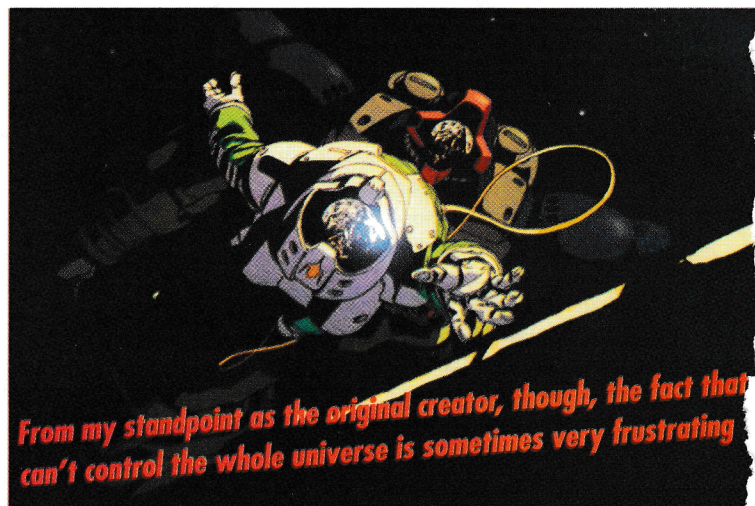


A: Legitimate? How so?

T: When people think of a creative person in the industry, they probably think of someone who works from a blank slate. But actually, even the greatest geniuses tend to draw ideas from their environment. So I think what I described is a legitimate method of being creative.

A: Are there any future projects you're planning to work on?

T: In terms of the *Gundam* world, I would like to create one more story



From my standpoint as the original creator, though, the fact that can't control the whole universe is sometimes very frustrating

An AMERICA Exclusive! Timeline to the Universal Century A Gundammaniac's Guide

Can't keep your Sides from Bunching up in confusion? Newtype Iohario Char Aznable giving you a Mass identity crisis? Gundam pundit Mark J.L. Simmons spells it all out in excruciating detail for those of us who weren't born with the ability to compute mega-wattages for the RX-78's beam saber sans calculator.

YEAR	DATE	EVENT
1957	10-04	USSR launches Sputnik, the first man-made satellite
1969		Professor G.K. O'Neill of Princeton University proposes concept of cylindrical space colonies. O'Neill's design later used to construct the Sides
1993		Small local wars break out across the globe, threatening to escalate into third World War. The crisis fuels concerns about the problems of overpopulation, pollution and scarcity of resources
1999	07-29	Earth Union government formed. Space colonization program announced
2026		Jupiter energy fleet (a line of large transport ships designed to collect helium and other gaseous fuels from Jupiter's atmosphere) established to meet Earth's energy needs. First ships in fleet launched from lunar orbit this year
2045		Construction of first space colonies (later known as Side 1) begins (Lagrange point 5)
0001		With Earth's population at 9 billion, space colonization program begins. Colonists are forcibly segregated into space. Construction of "Sides," clusters of O'Neill space colonies located at Lagrange points, commences. Year 0001 of the "Universal Century"
0009		Zeon Daikun born
0017		Degun Zabi born
0027		First permanent lunar settlement, Von Braun City, constructed
0040		40% of human population (5 billion people) now live in space. Philosophy of "Eileism," advocating that man should leave Earth to preserve its immaculate state, begins to take root
0045		Zeon Daikun proposes philosophy combining Eileism with a pre-Side agenda. Minorski Physics Society founded (Side 3)
0050		9 billion (of total human population of 11 billion) now emigrated to space
0058		Zeon Daikun, now leader of Side 3, proclaims Side's independence, establishing Zeon Republic
0059		Earth Union imposes economic sanctions on Side 3
0060		Cassaval Daikun born (Side 3)
0062		Union fleet begins major arms production program for the '60s, commissioning a space armada. Bright Noah born
0062		Artesia Daikun born (Side 3)
0064		Amuro Rey born (Earth)
0065		Dr. Y.T. Minorski predicts existence of Minorski particle. Minorski physics will eventually change the shape of warfare, providing near-total jamming of radar, leading to the development of the (Minorski) particle gun, and making possible the compact thermonuclear generators required for mobile suits (Side 3)
0067		Haman Khan, daughter of future Zeon Admiral, born
0068	10	Zeon Daikun dies (most likely by assassination); his advisor Degun Zabi becomes Premier
0069	08-15	Degun Zabi proclaims Side 3 the "Duchy of Zeon" and him self Archduke. His second son, Sasuro, is assassinated; Zabi purges Daikun's supporters from Side 3. Daikun's children Cassaval and Artesia escape to Earth under care of Jimba Rai. On Earth, they are adopted by the wealthy Mass family under the names "Edward" and "Sayla"
0070		Zeon researchers develop first (10-meter) humanoid mecha prototypes, combining space-construction pod design with AMBAC (active-mass balance control) technology, which provides zero-gravity maneuver control through fine limb movements. Major design problems remain (Side 3). Camille Vidian born

from the perspective of 10- to 15-year-old children. I'm also interested in doing something with the *Dunbine* world, maybe something in its future. It might be something, for example, where the inhabitants realize that only they can save the Earth from destruction.

A: How do you feel about the various print adaptations of the *Gundam* world? For instance, *MS Era* and *Gundam Sentinels*?

T: The fact that side stories are popular is something I am pleased about. Sometimes the side stories and the films made from them attract more fans than I'm able to generate. Because it does help to increase the *Gundam* market, I'm very happy for it. From my standpoint as the original creator, though, the fact that I can't control the whole universe is sometimes very frustrating. *Gundam's* been around for over ten years. In terms of business strategy and development, the side stories can be thought of as a vehicle to continue it for another ten. They're also another way to expand the market and continue it all over the world. In that sense they're valuable.

A: Finally, if you had the chance to recreate *Gundam*, what would you change from the original story? Would it perhaps be more adult-oriented?

T: If it came to remaking the *Gundam* series...well, it would depend on the conditions. At this point I'm not even considering it. However, if I were given the opportunity and the conditions under which to do so, then I'd demonstrate to you how I'd go about it. ★

You Say "Zion"—I Say "the Ideal Nation or Society Envisaged by Judaism"

by Fred Schodt

The Del Rey novel series translator Fred Schodt exposes himself to the censure of anime purists for ANIMERICA's sake in this special report.

One of the biggest problems I had in translating the three-volume *Gundam* series of novels was deciding how to spell the names of the nearly one hundred characters. *Gundam* is a complex sci-fi saga set in outer space, so author Yoshiyuki Tomino invented most of the names. Since he was writing them in Japanese with a phonetic script called *katakana* he did not have to spell any of them in English. That was left to me, the translator.

When I began work on the novels early in 1988, some American and Japanese fans of the animation series had already invented spellings for some names, but there was no unity to them; the rebel nation pronounced "Jion" in Japanese, for example, was variously spelled as "Zion," "Jion," or "Xeon" in English. I therefore went back to the original Japanese and tried to come up with spellings which I felt (1) sounded like the original and reflected the author's intent; (2) enhanced rather than detracted from the mood of the story; and (3) would be acceptable to American readers unfamiliar with the animation.

I thus spelled "Jion" as "Zeon," because "Z" has strong overtones (think of all the "z"s used in U.S. muscle-car names). "Zion" was unacceptable because some readers might think Tomino was making a religious statement, when he was not. The antagonist of the story, whose name is pronounced in Japanese as "Sha Azunaburu," I rendered as "Sha Aznable." I had seen this spelled variously as "Char Aznable" or even "Char Aznavour," but

"Char" didn't sound at all like the original Japanese, and had odd overtones of "charcoal" and "charwoman," etc. "Char Aznavour," the theory goes, derives from the French chansons singer, Charles Aznavour, but that didn't seem appropriate in a space adventure and might open Tomino up to a lawsuit. Interestingly, perhaps because of a lack of editing, the names of some characters were not even unified in the original Japanese

novels. One female character whose name I rendered as "Krushia" appears written phonetically as both "Kirishia" and "Kishiria."

Unfortunately, when I finished work on the series in 1991, the number of U.S. *Gundam* animation fans attached to the "Char" spelling of "Sha" had grown considerably. One message I received from an irate fan opened with, "I eagerly awaited the release of *Gundam*, and literally rushed out to buy the book.... I must say, you ruined my whole day. Your decision to change the names of the characters, chiefly Char, left me with a single question: Why?"

Issuing the *Gundam* novels as a mass-market paperback in English was a bold experiment on the part of Del Rey, the publisher. The *Gundam* universe is vast and confusing, and as Tomino always explains, the novels should be viewed as a story separate from the animation series. As the translator, I couldn't agree more, for the novels have a shockingly different ending. The important thing is to read them for what they are—good entertainment.



YEAR	DATE	EVENT
0072		Zeon sets up asteroid "Axis" as way station for Jupiter energy fleet (asteroid belt).
0073		Zeon military completes the MS-01, the first "mobile suit" (MS). These new anthropomorphic weapons are designed to be small, high-power and mobile, exploiting the space-combat maneuverability offered by AAMBAC technology.
0074		Cassius Dakin infiltrates Duchy of Zeon, entering the Zeon military academy under the name "Char Aznable".
0077		Duchy of Zeon begins full-scale preparations for war against Earth Union. Char Aznable and Gamma Zabi graduate from Zeon military academy (Side 3). Zeon expands its zone of control to include the lunar surface, reinforces its space fleet.
0078	10	Zeon declares state of national mobilization for impending war.
0079	01.03	Duchy of Zeon declares war for independence against Earth Union. Zeon forces execute blitz attacks on Sides 1, 2 and 4, achieving overwhelming victories with aid of MS troops.
	01.04	Zeon fleet forces colony out of orbit. Intended target: Zeon military headquarters at Jaburo in South America.
	01.10	Colony impacts Sydney, Australia, creating crater 560 kilometers across and wreaking havoc on Earth's weather and environment. From 01.03 to 01.10 (a period known thereafter as the "One-Week War"), indiscriminate use of thermonuclear and biochemical weapons (and the devastation caused by the colony's impact) have killed 3 billion people—25% of the human race.
	01.15	Zeon Lt. (jg) Char Aznable, in his customized red Zaku, personally destroys five Union battleships and becomes known as the "Red Comet".
	01.26	Temporary cease-fire called and truce negotiations begin (Antarctic). Treaty prohibiting use of nuclear and biochemical weapons completed days later, but there is no peace settlement.
	03	Zeon consolidates its power on Earth, utilizing captured facilities for military production and stationing air and marine forces. Union military begins rebuilding its space armada, beginning the "V-Project" to develop new MS and MS-carrying warships. Researchers develop <i>Gundarium</i> alloy, an improved form of titanium armor.
	04	Zeon Rear Admiral Krishna Zabi entrusts research into special abilities of "neotypes" to psychologist Dr. Flanagan.
	08	Union military Pegasus-class mobile assault carrier <i>White Base</i> (equipped with Minovsky craft system) ready for duty.
	09.18	Amuro Rey pilots RX-78 Gundam, its first use in combat.
	10	Zeon researchers develop psychocomm (psychic communicator) system—for remote-control under Minovsky jamming—in conjunction with Flanagan Organization.
	10.04	Gamma Zabi killed in battle with <i>White Base</i> . Char demoted.
	10.06	Admiral Giren Zabi's impassioned speech in Gamma's honor, intended to stir up fighting spirit in the colonies, is twice broadcast throughout the Earth/Lunar system. This is the first use of the rallying cry, "Sieg Zeon".
	11.30	During Jaburo assault, Char clashes with Gundam for first time. Assault fails to demolish MS production facilities; collapse of Zeon terrestrial forces accelerates.
	12.13	Amuro Rey meets Captain Char Aznable and Laiah Sun in person (though Char does not recognize Amuro as his adversary, the Gundam pilot), and is reunited with his father Tem Rey.
	12.17	Shuttle carrying NT-1 arrives at Side 6, 35-Bunch ("Revo").
	12.18	Cyclops team infiltrates Revo with disassembled experimental MS-18E Kämpfer.
	12.20	Cyclops team attacks Union military installation on Revo in attempt to destroy NT-1. Disguised as Union soldiers, team members including Corporal Barnard "Barney" Wiseman infiltrate NT-1's test site. NT-1's test pilot Lt. (jg) Christina "Chris" Mackenzie destroys Kämpfer; Cyclops team mem bers Garcia and Steiner killed in combat with Union troops.
	12.24	Largest space battle in history begins; 8,800 MS participate. Union fleet eventually sustains 20% losses; Zeon 35%. Outcome of Solomon battle goes unreported by Zeon media.
	12.25	Barney destroys NT-1, dying in attempt; Chris injured [Revo].
	12.29	Union 1st Combined Fleet departs Solomon, retaining "Comet Island". Fleet attacked by Elmeth, which destroys four Union ships on its first flight.
	12.30	Amuro destroys Elmeth. Laiah killed.

Introduction to the Latest Entry in the Gundam Saga

Mobile Suit
0083
GUNDAM

"Zeon's Fading Light"

by Yoshiyuki Kamekura

The jury's still out on whether auteur Yoshiyuki Tomino's personal involvement in a Gundam project during this last decade has been a bane or a boon at the box office. On the one hand, without him there could never have been the original 1979 Mobile Suit Gundam TV series; on the other hand, there would never have been a Gundam F-91. We take a look at the (Tomino-less) OAV—now a major motion picture—that's redefining the Gundam genre.

According to *Gundam* world chronology, the year when the first space colonization ship left Earth was named U.C. 0001 (for "Universal Century"). Within forty years, 40% of the total human population was living either in space, on the moon or in space colonies. By U.C. 0050, the total population had reached eleven billion, of which nine billion lived in space. On January 9, U.C. 0079, the One-Year War erupted.

This aptly named conflict is the focus of *Mobile Suit Gundam*, the 1979 television series which started the legendary *Gundam* phenomena. The battle between the disparate Earth Federation government factions—the rebellious Anti-Earth Union Government (AEUG), and the extremist Earth Federation Military's elite corps, the Titans—is chronicled in 1985's *Zeta Gundam* series.

Set three years after the end of the One-Year War (as chronicled in the *Mobile Suit Gundam 0080, A War in the Pocket* OAV

series), 1991's *Gundam 0083* is a prequel of sorts to *Zeta Gundam* and focuses on the plan of the Delars' Fleet to restore the faltering Zeon Empire.

Until this recent twelve-volume OAV series, the seven years between the end of the One-Year War in *Mobile Suit Gundam* and the beginning of the AEUG-Titans battle in *Zeta Gundam* was an unknown time period and source of immense speculation among fans.

Gundam 0083 features an original storyline which is somehow strangely familiar—a young, novice Federation pilot comes into violent personal conflict with an obsessed Zeon mobile suit ace, set amidst the backdrop of a gritty war drama with scores of casualties (and don't forget the doomed love triangle).

The plot point around which *Gundam 0083* revolves, the colony drop, also goes back to the original, where a falling colony destroys Sydney, Australia and becomes one of the causes of the One-Year War.

For the defeated Zeons, the mobile suit arms race initiated by the Earth Federation Military in U.C. 0083 was a great threat. Admiral Aiguille Delars and his surviving Zeon forces take the chance to make a statement by dropping a colony on Earth.

This first step in this so-called "Stardust Operation"—only one part of which involves the theft of a nuclear warhead—equipped Gundam—makes strange bedfellows indeed as loyalties are tested and new alliances are forged in this most exciting *Gundam* sequel yet.

The last volume in the *Stardust Memory* OAV series was released on September 24, 1992. The 110-minute film "Zeon's Fading Light" was released theatrically on August 29, 1992. Basically a compilation of the OAV series with ten minutes of new footage, "Zeon's Fading Light" is extensively re-edited and deletes much of the story's character development and dra-

matic build-up to the climax.

Gundam 0083 is a short and concise story to begin with, radically different from what fans have come to expect from a Tomino-created *Gundam* feature. There are no newtypes, for example, or existential musings on the nature of newtypes, or even the by-now clichéd *götterdämmerung*-like ending.

From the start, the *Stardust Memory* OAV series was a finely crafted, theatrical-quality release. In converting it into a movie, the creators faced two challenges. The first was to compress the story into 110 minutes. Many characters and battle scenes (including a sequence involving the full-vernian Gundam) were deleted. The second challenge was to make the story acceptable to an audience who might or might not be fans of the OAV series.

The key element in accomplishing this task may have been the simplicity of the story. Political intricacies aside, "Zeon's Fading Light" could be viewed in some lights solely as a robot-action film.

The last scenes in "Zeon's Fading Light" cover the trial and sentencing of the Federation hero, Koh Uraki; the formation of the Titans; and the erasure of all records pertaining to the Gundam test units. Unlike the OAV series, the dubious "happy ending" of Koh and Nina's reunion is not included. The film's ending leaves other questions unanswered as well.

Many viewers left the theater asking themselves, "What was *Gundam 0083*?" No matter what else it might have been, it was a chance to view the *Gundam* world from a perspective other than that of Yoshiyuki Tomino. It was also a reassurance that *Gundam* can be revived and adapted to the changing world of today. ★

YEAR DATE

0080	12.31	During negotiations with 1st Combined Fleet, Arch Duke Degin Zabi killed by own side as Gien Zabi orders firing of "Solar Ray System" (a colony converted into a huge laser cannon). Union sustains 60% losses.
		Battle of Abakuu begins. Eventual Union occupation marks final defeat of Duchy of Zeon. Zeon Republic government establishes armistice with Union. Zeon Captain Aiguille Delars withdraws forces from battle upon news of Gien Zabi's death. Lt. Anavel Gato, the "Nightmare of Solomon," accompanies him aboard battleship <i>Gwaden</i> . Char Aznable escapes to Axis via Granada aboard battle ship <i>Asialum</i> .
	01	Delars gathers those remaining Zeon forces who declined to go to Axis.
	01.01	Treaty concluding "One-Year War" is reached on moon (Granada). Now under civilian rule, the Duchy of Zeon once again becomes Zeon Republic. Under terms of armistice, Zeon retains its autonomy.
	0081	As part of reconstruction plan, Gundam Development Project initiated (in conjunction with Anaheim).
	0082	Delars' Fleet plans manufacturing of new MS at factories in Garden of Thorns.
	0083	Delars' Fleet completes plan for "Operation Stardust".
	08.11	Haman Khan, at age 16, becomes regent of Minerva Zabi. She makes overtures toward the Delars' Fleet (Axis).
	10.13	Gato steals Test Unit-2 equipped with nuclear warhead.
	10.25	Commander Cima Garahau joins squadron with Delars' Fleet.
0084	10.31	Delars declares war. Speech is broadcast throughout Earth Luna system.
	11.10	[1431] Gato attacks naval review, targeting Union heavy battleship <i>Birmingham</i> with nuclear warhead. Two-thirds of Union fleet destroyed or severely damaged.
		[1505] Test Unit-1 and Unit-2 destroyed in combat.
		[2111] After Cima's squadron hijacks two colonies, a mirror panel is severed from each, destabilizing their rotation.
		[2126] The two colonies collide, one of them headed for Luna.
		Estimated time of impact is 1315 on 0083.11.11.
		[2135] Remainder of Union fleet departs Compei Island in pursuit of colony.
	11.11	[0414] Main body of Delars' Fleet joins Cima's group, escorting descending colony.
		[1040] Anaheim uses laser propulsion system to deflect course of colony. Now bound for Earth, estimated time of colony impact is 0334 on 0083.11.13.
		[1518] Albion and Unit-3 depart <i>La Vie en Rose</i> in attempt to intercept colony.
0084	11.12	[1006] Unit-3 attacks Delars' Fleet forces escorting colony.
		[1351] Union fleet commanded by Captain Bosk Ohm departs Luna.
		[1715] Cima captures bridge of <i>Gwaden</i> , intending to deliver Delars to the Union.
		[1934] Colony crosses "point of no return".
		[2015] Delars killed by Cima.
		[2147] Bosk's forces fire "Solar System II," failing to deflect the colony. Only 166 minutes and 47 seconds remain until impact.
	11.13	[0000] Solar System II fires a second time, altering the course of descending colony.
		[0013] Colony enters Earth's atmosphere, appearing in skies above Jaburo.
		[0034] Colony impacts North America.
		[0119] Gato dies.
0084	11.23	Albion captain Elphar Synapse sentenced to death by military tribunal. Gundam test pilot Koh Uraki sentenced to one year in prison.
	12.04	Union military establishes "Titans," an elite force under the control of Commodore Jamior Hyman to wipe out Zeon resistance groups.
	03.10	Titans erase all records of the colony drop, the Stardust Operation and the Gundam Development Project. Koh released from prison.
	09.21	Char Aznable returns to Earth, joining the Union military under the alias "Quattro Bajina."

What's new? What's hot? And where can I see it? In this section, ANIMERICA brings you the best of the current releases and the latest news straight from the Japanese anime industry.



Battle Angel Fever!

America's favorite manga heartthrob is about to star in her first animated feature! Yukito Kishiro's fast-paced cyber-action comic *Gunnm* (retitled *Battle Angel Alita* for Viz Comics' English version) will be released as a two-part OAV beginning this June with the second part following in August.

Far below the utopian city of Tiphareth is a scrap yard, home to rubbish and refuse both human and not. Daisuke Ido, an eccentric inventor, stumbles across the wreckage of a two- to three-hundred-year-old cyborg he names "Galy" (or "Alita") after a pet cat that died the month before. In the best Frankenstein

tradition, Daisuke begins assembling a new body part by part for the beautiful, amnesiac cyborg, who may be more than she seems....

Gunnm's high-powered staff includes the illustrious Rin Taro (director, *Galaxy Express 999* movie) as editorial supervisor, with direction by Hiroshi Fukumiya (*Locke the Superman* movie), script by Akinori Kondo (*Five Star Stories*), character designs and executive art direction by Nobuteru Yuki (*Record of Lodoss War*), and art direction by Tai Fujikawa (*Kujakuoh* 2). Production is by Animate Film.

Each installment of *Gunnm* is scheduled to be 30 minutes in length and will be released through KSS. *Battle Angel*

Alita, the English version of Kishiro's original *Gunnm* comic, is currently available through Viz.

New TV Series from Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli

First serialized in *Animage* magazine from February, 1990 to January, 1992, Saeko Himuro's popular novel *I Can Hear the Ocean* is currently in production as an animated feature at Studio Ghibli.

Studio Ghibli is well-known as the studio of world-famous animator Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, and has produced numerous animated features such as *Crimson Pig* and *My Neighbor Totoro*. For *I Can Hear the Ocean*, however, it's the younger members of Studio Ghibli who are in charge.

Katsuya Kondo, who illustrated the original *I Can Hear the Ocean* novel series, will handle character design and art director duties. Director Tomomi Mochizuki is well-known for his work in similar animated romances such as the final *Maison Ikkoku* movie as well as the *Kimagure Orange Road* film, "I Want to Return to that Day." His most recent project is Victor Music's new six-volume OAV series, *This is Greenwood*.

I Can Hear the Ocean revolves around a group of students living in the rural Tosa/Kochi prefecture of Japan. Although many of her novels have previously been recreated as films and television dramas, *I Can Hear the Ocean* is the first work of Saeko Himuro to be animated. Television broadcast is scheduled for this spring.

Another Future for Dragon Ball

Last summer, the world's bestselling weekly comic magazine *Shonen Jump* featured a one-shot companion story to their continuing *Dragon Ball* series called "Trunks, the Story: The Lone Warrior." The story proved so popular with the comic's readers that an animated adaptation tentatively titled *Another Future: Gohan and Trunks* is currently in the works.

The story is set in an alternate future to the regular *Dragon Ball* timeline in which most of the usual *Dragon Ball* characters—Tenshinhan, Piccolo, Kulilin and Yamcha—have been murdered by the artificial humans Nos. 17 and 18 (main



character Gokuu has died of a virulent heart disease). The only survivors are Gokuu's son Gohan and Trunks, the mysterious youth who set it all in motion when he came back in time trying to prevent the tragedy.

Although *Another Future* is based on the *Dragon Ball* comic continuity created by author Akira Toriyama (*Dr. Slump*), there are several variations and points of difference such as the way Gohan loses his arm and the first time Trunks becomes a Super Saiyan. The *Another Future* television special is actually a prequel to the *Dragon Ball Z* television series wherein Trunks first appears around episode #122, originally broadcast in early January of last year.

Toriyama's *Dragon Ball* manga and both *Dragon Ball* animated TV series have been consistent winners in the ratings game. There have been thirty-three volumes of the comic collected to date, and with *Dragon Ball* one of *Shonen Jump* magazine's most popular serialized stories, the long-running anime and manga series shouldn't be ending any time soon.

Ah! My Goddess Dial "P" for Pulchritude

While letting his fingers do the walking one day, a very typical college student named Keiichi Morisato accidentally dials a very untypical phone number and comes in contact

with a goddess who offers to grant one wish. When his jokingly requested "Will you stay with me always?" is granted, Keiichi finds himself kicked out of his men-only dormitory and must find a place for the two of them, a man and a goddess, to live together in domestic bliss forever....

Ah! My Goddess is based on the original comic written by Keisuke Fujishima, currently running in Kodansha's *Comic Afternoon* manga compilation. The series will be released as a four-volume OAV beginning in February from Kodansha and KSS. Direction is by Hiroaki Aida, with character design and art direction by Hidenori Matsubara. Animation is by AIC.

Each 25-minute installment should bring viewers closer to an acquaintance-ship with not only Beldandie (Keiichi's goddess) but her equally lovely sister goddesses Urald and Skald. Those wishing to grow even closer are advised to seek out the "Three Goddesses Debut Pack," a set of three CD singles featuring the three character voices of the series singing various original songs (divinely, we would guess). ★

Hot Flashes

Due to the popularity of the six-volume *Ushio and Tiger* OAV series from Toho Video, a second four-volume OAV series has been announced.

Ushio and Tiger is the story of a young boy from a family of demon-

hunters who inherits a fearsome spear (and the demon it was designed to combat). Together, the two must form an uneasy alliance to battle stray spirits and other supernatural entities.

The new series is scheduled for release this summer.

The magical wand-wielding flower princess is back! *Minky Momo*, "A Poem of One Bridge" is the title of the new OAV from King Record scheduled for release this spring. Direction is by Kunihiko Yuyama, with art direction by Shu Horiuchi. The 45-minute OAV is written by Akemi Omode and Takeshi Shudo.

Muldiver is a new 30-minute OAV from Pioneer LDC and a virtual one-man show from character designer Hiroyuki Kitazume (*Bastard!!*, *Gaiearth*). This time, Kitazume is responsible not only for character design but for script and direction duties as well.

The "Muldiver" is a supersuit which defies most laws of physics by removing almost all forms of impact and resistance to the wearer. While wearing it, the user is able to run faster than Japan's *Shinkansen* bullet train, knock down buildings and assume any form regardless of the wearer's size or weight.

Muldiver is scheduled for a February release this year.

Animation fans around the world were disappointed when the last episode of Fuji TV's phenomenally successful *Chibi Maruko-Chan* ("Little Miss Maruko") TV series broadcast its last episode on September 27. However, a new film should have fans of the cynical third-grader singing "pii-hyaara, pii-hyaara" in the aisles.

Chibi Maruko-Chan, "My Favorite Song" opened in theaters across Japan late last year. If the first *Chibi Maruko* film is any indication, "My Favorite Song" should be available in video rental stores in both Japan and America this summer.

Crimson Pig, Hayao Miyazaki's tale about aviation in the Adriatic during the 1920s, triumphed at the Japanese box office to become 1992's top-grossing film.

Premiering nationwide in mid-July, the animated film beat out domestic and international releases including *Hook*, Steven Spielberg's ode to middle-age paternal yuppie angst as told through the legend of Peter Pan. *Hook* was the year's top-grossing foreign film. ★



VIDEO CLIPS

JAPAN'S TOP TEN

The Bestselling Animated Videos, Compiled
by Original Confidence Research Company
(From 1/10/93 thru 2/9/93)

- 1 **No Need for Tenchi! Demon Emperor Ryou 3**
Pioneer LDC • ¥4800
- 2 **This is Greenwood III**
Victor Music • ¥5800
- 3 **Superdimensional Fortress Macross II • Volume Six**
Bandai • ¥4800
- 4 **New Century GPX CyberFormula 11 • Volume One**
VAP • ¥4800
- 5 **Tokyo Babylon**
Sony Music Entertainment • ¥9800
- 6 **Bastard!! • Chapter Two**
Shueisha • ¥4500
- 7 **Little Stories for Sleepless Nights 3**
Amuse • ¥3800
- 8 **All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl, Phase-01**
King • ¥5800
- 9 **Superdimensional Fortress Macross II • Volume Five**
Bandai • ¥4800
- 10.. **Ushio and Tiger • Volume Two**
Shogakukan • ¥4800

WHAT THEY SAY THEY'RE WATCHING

The Top Ten Anime TV Shows in Japan Based on Anime
Magazine Readers' Polls [From 11/11/92 thru 12/10/92]

- 1 **LOVELY SOLDIER Sailor Moon**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 2 **The Poltergeist Report**
Fuji TV • Saturdays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 3 **Dragon Ball Z**
Fuji TV • Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 4 **Papuwa of the South Seas**
TV Asahi • Saturdays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 5 **Ribbon of the Little Princess**
Tokyo TV • Fridays @ 6:00 p.m.
- 6 **LITTLE ANGEL OF THE SAVANNAH Bush Baby**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 7 **Mama is a Fourth-Grader**
Japan TV • Fridays @ 5:00 p.m.
- 8 **Tangerine Picture Diary**
TBS • Fridays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 9 **Crayon Shin-Chan**
TV Asahi • Mondays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 10 **Sazae-San**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:30 p.m.

...AND WHAT THE RATINGS SAY THEY'RE WATCHING

The Tokyo Top Ten Anime TV Shows Based on Rating Shares Compiled
by Video Research [From 11/30/92 thru 12/6/92]

- 1 **Sazae-San**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 2 **Dragon Ball Z**
Fuji TV • Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 3 **The Poltergeist Report**
Fuji TV • Saturdays @ 6:30 p.m.
- 4 **Get a Grip, Tsuyoshi**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 6:00 p.m.
- 5 **Crayon Shin-Chan**
Asahi TV • Mondays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 6 **Encyclopedia Kiteketsu**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 7 **Doraemon**
TV Asahi • Fridays @ 7:00 p.m.
- 8 **LITTLE ANGEL OF THE SAVANNAH Bush Baby**
Fuji TV • Sundays @ 7:30 p.m.
- 9 **Shonen Ashibe 2**
TBS • Saturdays @ 5:30 p.m.
- 10 **Super Bikkuriman**
TV Asahi • Sundays @ 8:30 a.m.

Highlights from the Top Japanese Anime Magazines Between the Covers FEBRUARY, 1993

Japan publishes more books and magazines than any other nation in the world. Naturally, this means more publications devoted to anime and manga. Use this handy guide to keep up with the exciting (but sometimes confusing) anime and manga publishing world.

Animage (Tokuma Books)

- "Gather, Super Soldiers," *Dragon Ball Z* Special Supplement
- Inside Scoop: *Yadamon*
- 1992's Ten Biggest Anime News Stories
- "Ame-Chan's Lesson of Love!?" *Lovely Warrior Sailor Moon*
- "The Great Four-Shot," New Fall TV Animation for '93
- "Finale to a Long Fight," *Space Knight Tekkaman Blade*
- Results of the 15th Annual Anime Grand Prix
- GIVEAWAYS: 1993 Animage Pocket Data Notes

Animedia (Gakken)

- Anime Character Awards
- *Lovely Warrior Sailor Moon* Sweetheart Search
- *Da-Gan* and *Space Knight Tekkaman Blade*: "Thanks for the Memories"
- The Latest on *Wataru 3*
- "Great Predictions from the Spirit World," *The Poltergeist Report* and *Papuwa of the South Seas*
- Updates on Popular OAVs, New Movies
- GIVEAWAYS: Voice-Actor Stationary Set/*Da-Gan* and *Mama is a Fourth-Grader* Book/Character Stickers '93 Calendar Labels/*Sailor Moon* Poster

Anime V (Gakken)

- FEATURES: *The Three Beaskeeters/Rajin-Oh/Princess Army/RG Veda/All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl/Demon Hunter Yohko 2/Compiler/Giant Robo/Babel II/More*
- Celebrity Voice-Actor Interviews
- NEW FEATURE: Readers' OAV Showcase
- Scoopphase '93: *Gunnm/Idol Self-Defense Force Team Hummingbird/This is Greenwood 5/Oh! My Goddess/Others*
- GIVEAWAYS: OAV Catalog '92/*Cyber Formula 11* and *Ramune 40* Poster

Newtype (Kadokawa Books)

- New Spring Line-Up: *Irresponsible Captain Tylor/Hero Express Maitgain/Nan and Teacher Jo*
- "A Romance You Can't See on TV," *Message of Love from Sailor Moon's Character Voices*
- "The Heavy Price of Losing One's Memory," *Space Knight Tekkaman Blade*
- *Dark Angel* by Kia Asamiya
- *Marionette Generation* by Haruhiko Mikimoto
- *Shanghai Kajinzoku* with story and art by Takahito Kusanagi
- The Official Art of *Oh! My Goddess*
- GIVEAWAYS: The Official Cover Art of *Five Star Stories*

A Unique Perspective from our Manga and Anime Insider

FROM THE FOREST

As a manager of Manga no Mori ("Comics Forest"), the largest comic/anime merchandise specialty chain in Japan, **Takashi Oshiguchi** has been involved in the industry not only as a retailer but as a journalist for more years than he can count. In addition to his many articles, Oshiguchi writes occasionally for Animage magazine and has had his own column in the comic trade journal Comic Box.



THE OAV REVOLUTION

Here's a bit of trivia: What's the name of the first original animation video? And when was it released? (The answer is given at the bottom of the page.)

Roughly speaking, Japanese animation can be categorized into those based on manga and those that are original projects by anime production companies. A few better-known manga-based examples include Rumiko Takahashi's *Ranma 1/2* and Leiji Matsumoto's *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*. Original projects include *Mobile Suit Gundam* and *Superdimensional Fortress Macross*.

This Japanese animation or "anime" was originally created for the purpose of being broadcast on television. Because it was necessary to win a broad viewership to get and keep ratings high, it was the well-known manga that was selected as the story to base the animation on. In the cases of *Gundam* and *Macross*, toy companies sponsored the projects with the intention of using the shows as vehicles to sell their product.

By the late 1980s, original anime began to be produced as direct-to-home videos. These OAVs didn't need to worry about gaining ratings or selling toys. In the case of a manga-based original animation video, the manga itself need not be well-known in the mainstream just so long as the fans of the comic happened to overlap with the market of all-consuming anime fans.

A good example from these early days in the OAV market might be Masamune Shirow's *Black Magic M-66*. For television purposes, there must be enough material to create at least 24 half-hour episodes. In the OAV format, however, even a short story such as *Black Magic* could be made into a marketable video, allowing planning and production to become far more flexible.

Videos such as *Gall Force* and *Bubblegum Crisis*, featuring a then-unheard-of character designer named Kenichi Sonoda, could find a market so long as they won the support of anime fans. That is to say, the birth of a new anime market called the "anime video" created a space in which fresh and unique projects could be created. With the emergence of this new breed of anime came a new type of artist who worked in television and gained fans, whose support in turn enabled new projects to see the light of day.

The best success of this type is *Mobile Police Patlabor*. The director, character designer, mecha designer and screenwriter, all of whom had achieved separate success, joined forces to create a team known as "Headgear" which would create immense excitement among anime fans. *Patlabor's* ongoing history—first an original animation series, then a theatrical release, then a television series, another OAV series and now once more a second theatrical release—proves how deep-rooted is its fan support.

The multimedia success story of *Patlabor* isn't limited to animation. A manga artist who joined the project developed his own stories based on the same setting, and a screenwriter wrote novelizations of the *Patlabor* world.

Today, there are more anime videos in production than ever before. Their target audience is no longer limited to children and die-hard anime fans but has come to include mainstream adults as well. Just as the manga world boasts of its grown-up readers, anime is gaining an adult audience of its own. It follows that anime of even more diverse content will come forth to accommodate the new market.

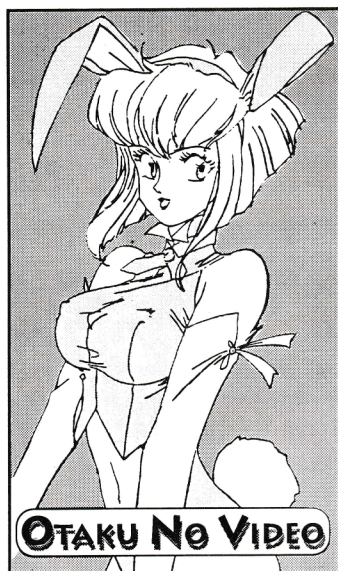
The video was the otherwise unexceptional science fiction story Dallos, released on December 21, 1983.

OAV Release Schedule Coming Soon in Japan

Direct from Japan, this month's most accurate and up-to-date original animation video release schedule. ★ = Not yet known. ♥ = Series reviewed in this issue.

ON SALE	FORMAT	TITLE	ORDER NOS. (VHS/LD)	SOLD THRU	PRICE (VHS/LD)	LENGTH	PRODUCTION COMPANY
3/1	VHS/LD	New Century GPX Cyber Formula 11, Vol. 4	VPV-63118/VPLV-70221 (CAV)	VAP	¥4800/¥4800	0:30	Sunrise
3/10	VHS/LD	Crimson Wolf	★	Toshiba EMI	¥12,360/★	0:50	A.P.P.P.
3/21	VHS/LD	Labyrinth of the Netherworld Zeguy, Part One	JSVA22111/JSLA22111 (CLV)	KSS (Japan Soft System)	¥4800/¥4800	0:35	KSS
3/21	VHS/LD	Takamaru, Chapter Four	BES-796/BEAL-548	Bandai Visual	¥4800/¥4800	0:25	J.C. Staff/Studio Live
3/24	VHS/LD	All-Purpose Cultural Cat Girl, Phase-0III	KIVA-153/KILA-46 (CAV)	King Record	¥5800/¥5800	0:30	Animate Film
3/25	VHS/LD	Green Legend Ran 3	PIVS-1156/PILA-1132 (CLV)	Pioneer LDC	¥10,094/¥8034	0:45	A.I.C.
3/25	VHS/LD	Moldiver 2	PIVA-1008/PILA-1140 (CAV)	Pioneer LDC	¥4800/¥4800	0:30	A.I.C.
3/25	VHS/LD	Machine God Corps 1	PIVA-1013/PILA-1145 (CLV)	Pioneer LDC	¥4800/¥4800	0:60	Galaxy Empire
3/25	VHS/LD	No Need for Tenchi! Demon Emperor Ryou 6	PIVA-1006/PILA-1138	Pioneer LDC	¥4800/¥4800	0:30	A.I.C.
3/25	VHS/LD	Yoshitaka Amano-The World of the Elegant Beauty of Illusion	POVV-9151/POLV-9151	Polydor	¥19,800/¥19,800	2:15	—
3/26	VHS/LD	This is Greenwood, Vol. 6	VIVF-10078/VILF-26 (CLV)	Victor Music Industry	¥5800/¥7800	0:30	Studio Pierrot
3/26	VHS/LD	Epic Fantasy Elcia, Vol. 3	JHE-399/★	CIC/Victor (Japan AVC)	¥4800/★	0:45	J.C. Staff
March	VHS/LD	Nozomi Witches, Part Three	★/TOLA-1127	Toshiba EMI	¥12,360/★	0:45	Group Tack
March	VHS/LD	Wolf Guy, Vol. 4	BES-787/BEAL-510 (CAV)	Bandai Visual	¥4800/¥4800	0:27	Visual Studio
March	VHS/LD	Tales of Apelland	★/★	Tokuma Shoten	★/★	1:30	J.C. Staff

If it's Anime, it's gotta be AnimEigo!



When Japan's whackiest Animation Studio decided to do a sendup of Fandom, they didn't have to look far -- for the folks at Gainax are all fans themselves. **Otaku No Video** ("Fan's Video") is a hilarious fake history of Japanese fandom in general, and Gainax in particular, intercut with "mockumentary" interviews with fans, that ends up with the fans deciding to "Otakunize" the human race.

Loaded with a huge number of fan "in-jokes," Otaku no Video is a must buy for every Animation, Comic Book or SF Fan. \$39.95.



Urusei Yatsura

When a highly charged Alien Princess falls for a luckless and lecherous lout, the stage is set for some very outrageous comedy!

2 tapes per month:
\$39.95 ea.

TV Tapes: 2nd Wed.
Movie/OVA's: 4th Wed.



Bubblegum Crisis

The Cyberpunk Classic
2032 MegaTokyo --
Technology is exploding!

8 Episodes: \$34.95 ea.

Hurricane Live 2032 &
2033, Music Videos:
\$19.95 ea.

LaserDiscs: (4 volumes, all
8 episodes plus music
videos, monthly from
11/15/92) \$64.95 ea.



Kimagure Orange Road

Hikaru loves Kyosuke,
and makes sure every-
one knows it.

Madoka thinks she loves
Kyosuke, but nobody
knows it.

Kyosuke doesn't know
who he loves, but he's
praying nobody finds
out about the family
curse -- Psychic Powers!

5 Volumes: \$39.95 ea.



Genesis Survivor Gaiarth

The people who brought
you Bubblegum Crisis
and Bubblegum Crash
are back -- with a post-
apocalyptic SF action
adventure.

Episode 1: \$34.95

Watch for episode 2
in April.

S

SUBTITLED FOR THE
JAPANESE LANGUAGE
IMPAIRED.

GREAT AUNT EDNA'S WARNING: First Comics, now this? You're going to rot your mind, child! Why, when I was your age, we... (etc,etc,etc.)

"The Best Movies You'll Ever Read"

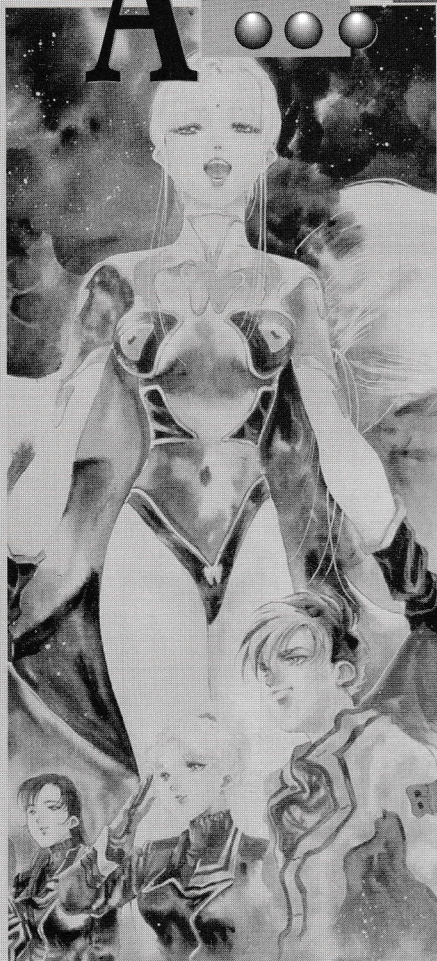
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(919) 251-1850
(919) 763-2376 (fax)

AnimEigo

Anime News Dateline

A M E R I C A

The best of the current releases and the latest news straight from the American anime industry. With the emergence of U.S.-based anime subbing and dubbing companies, it's more important now than ever to know who's releasing what, where, why and how. **Dateline: America** is your one-stop U.S. anime information source.



Macross II, Giant Robo Slated for Silver Screen

Macross II, the bestselling OAV sequel to 1982's *Superdimensional Fortress Macross* TV series, will be released as an English-dubbed theatrical feature this March with *Giant Robo* tentatively scheduled to follow this summer.

Guy Cables, president of the Bay-Area based Tara Releasing, announced recently that L.A. Hero's six-episode *Macross II*, "Lovers Again" OAV series will tour theaters across the country as a 120-minute film, starting with Los Angeles. A limited number of 35 mm prints will begin the tour, although Cables said that depending upon the film's success, more prints may be released to play in as many as 80-100 cities across the country.

Macross II will mark the first-time entry of L.A. Hero into the English-dubbed theatrical release market. Among the American anime industry's "Big Five"—AnimEigo, L.A. Hero, Streamline Pictures, U.S. Manga Corps and U.S. Renditions—only Streamline has been known for theatrical releases until now.

Giant Robo, the eagerly anticipated retrofitted classic from director Yasuhiro Imagawa (*Aura Battler Dunbine*, *Heavy Metal L-Gaim*), will first be released exclusively through L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions as an English-dubbed OAV series and then as a theatrical feature through L.A. Hero/Tara following *Macross II*, Cables said.

Featuring mechanical designs by Makoto Kobayashi (*Gundam ZZ*, *Venus Wars*), special-effects animation by Hideaki Anno (*Gunbuster*, *Secret of Blue Water*) and a full-blown orchestral soundtrack by the Warsaw Philharmonic, *Giant Robo* looks to be an almost decadent recreation of Japan's classic comics of the 1950s and '60s. Preview episodes of *Robo* at last year's Anime Expo were among the anime and manga exposition's most well-received screenings. If the proposed seven-episode *Robo* series can manage to live up to its advance publicity, it looks to be one of 1993's biggest hits.

Previous releases from Tara include last year's Academy Award-winning documentary *Deadly Deception*. Tara has also been the U.S. distributor for Keiji Nakazawa's autobiographical *Barefoot Gen*, an animated account of the August 6, 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Macross II and *Giant Robo* will mark the three-year-old company's second and third animated Japanese releases, respectively. Look to ANIMERICA for more news as it develops.

Orange Road Leads Flurry of LD Releases from AnimEigo

Following close upon the heels of their *Vampire Princess Miyu* laser disc release, the North Carolina-based video subtitling company AnimEigo has announced the release of the Kimagure Orange Road OAV series and theatrical release on laser disc.

The first OAV volume in Izumi Matsumoto's "psychic love-comedy" is tentatively scheduled for release this May. The second volume is scheduled for July, with the KOR theatrical feature "I Want to Return to that Day" to follow in September. The first two LDs will retail at \$64.95, with the third "movie" disc retailing at \$54.95. All three discs may be ordered in advance at a special \$155.00 price.

Although AnimEigo has already established a reputation for innovative

pricing and marketing, their planned bimonthly laser disc release of the *Urusei Yatsura* OAVs and movies marks an interesting new strategy. In order to promote membership in their "Urusei Yatsura LD Club," AnimEigo has announced that sale of manga wunderkind Rumiko Takahashi's perennially popular *UY* series won't be scheduled until they have at least 1000 orders for the first disc. Members of the club receive 20% off and no shipping and handling charges. According to AnimEigo, release of the 196-episode *UY* television series on laser disc is currently under consideration.

Other laser disc releases in 1993 include AnimEigo's first subtitled release *Madox-01*, to be released on a single disc with *Riding Bean*, for \$64.95. The disc is tentatively scheduled for a mid-summer release, with a special \$55.00 price available for advance orders. As with their earlier *Bubblegum Crisis* laser disc, both *Madox-01* and *Riding Bean* will be re-translated and re-subtitled for this release.

Maris the What!? Trademark Worries Spur U.S. Manga Corps Name Change

Shortly after its release early last November, East Coast-based U.S. Manga Corps announced that they will retitle their subtitled *The Supergal* OAV to "Maris the Chojo" (lit., "super" + "female").

Based on the popular short story by manga wunderkind Rumiko Takahashi, *The Supergal* is an intergalactic tale of love, money and wrestling whose title bears a rather unfortunate resemblance to another "super" powered humanoid protected under U.S. trademark. Warner Brothers, whose *Batman*, *The Animated Series* recently made the jump to prime time on the Fox TV network, reportedly expressed concern that the title of Takahashi's buxom bounty hunter, the "Supergal" Maris, was a possible trademark infringement.

Viz Comics, who plan to publish the *Supergal* comic in their upcoming *Rumic World Graphic Novel*, have agreed to go along with the name change for the sake of consistency.

"We certainly don't feel that *Supergal* infringes on Warner Brothers' trademark in any way," said Viz Comics' managing



editor Satoru Fujii. "After all, the comic's been around in Japan for almost ten years now. However, we've decided to accept the name change mainly because we understand (Warner Brothers') viewpoint."

Except for the last-minute name switch, plans for both U.S. Manga Corps' OAV and Viz Comics' English adaptation remain unchanged.

AnimEigo's "Otakunization" of the U.S. Begins this March

Billing it an "outrageous mockumentary," AnimEigo's subtitled release of Gainax's *Otaku no Video*—Graffiti of the Otaku Generation on March 17 marks a major milestone in American anime fandom.

The word "otaku" has a long and infamous history. No more than a Japanese second-person pronoun initially, the term gained notoriety after it was associated with a certain type of fan known for an obsessive, overzealous fascination with trivia of almost any kind.

Contrary to the many U.S. anime fans who've adopted the term as a self-applied label, in Japan the term isn't limited solely to animation or even manga. Computer otaku, car otaku and even otaku for the waitresses at Anna Miller's coffee shops (the brevity of the frilly pink uniform may have something to do with it) make up what's known as Japan's "otaku zoku" or "otaku tribe."

Fortunately, in its American usage the term has lost most of its negative connotations and currently means nothing more than "a devoted fan of anime and/or manga." With animated sequences intercut with video interviews of real-life otaku (of garage kit, "adult" computer game and even toy-gun otaku), AnimEigo's release of this "thinly fictionalized history" of the Gainax animation studio is doomed to strike an all-too-familiar chord in everyone who's ever dubbed themselves "fan."

Otaku no Video will retail at \$39.95. Don't say you weren't warned.

U.S. Manga Corps Reveals Secret of Immortality

Mermaid Forest, the third OAV in Rumiko Takahashi's "Rumic World" series, leads this month's releases from U.S. Manga Corps.

Partake of the mermaid's flesh, the legend says, and you'll live forever. But what happens when you don't want to be immortal anymore? Now a 55-minute subtitled OAV, the uniquely macabre *Mermaid Forest* is an intriguing change of pace for fans more familiar with the wackiness of Takahashi's other titles such as *Urusei Yatsura* or *Ranma 1/2*. Other "Rumic World" stories previously animated include *Fire Tripper*, *Laughing Target* and *Maris the Chojo* (see above). *Mermaid Forest* is the second story to be released in an English-language version and will retail at \$34.95.

U.S. Manga Corps' subtitled release of *Venus Wars* marks the film's fourth anniversary. The 104-minute theatrical feature was first released on March 11, 1989 and is directed by Yoshikazu

Yasuhiko, well-known as the original character designer of *Mobile Suit Gundam* and *Crusher Joe*. A comic version of *Venus Wars* with story and art by Yasuhiko is currently being released through Dark Horse Comics.

In the 21st century, mankind lives on two planets. Following the collision of an ice asteroid, massive terraforming has made the planet Venus capable of supporting life. Earth colonists have thrived on the formerly hostile world for four generations, but with the latest terraforming technology they've also brought the darkest side of their humanity. Venus, it seems, is about to become hostile once more.

Both *Mermaid Forest* and *Venus Wars* are scheduled for a March 3 release. The longer *Venus Wars* theatrical feature will retail at the slightly higher price of \$39.95.

Subtitled Videos to D.I.E. For

L.A. Hero, in cooperation with the newly created release label Dark Images Entertainment, announced their first-time entry into the subtitled arena with the release of two new OAVs, *Raven Tengu Kabuto* and 1986's original animated feature, *Bio-Booster Guyver*, "Out of Control."

Although our previous releases have been dubbed, we felt that the integrity of both *Kabuto* and the *Guyver* feature would best be preserved through subtitled, said L.A. Hero producer Robert Napton. "Kabuto is an unusual blend of traditional Japanese mythology and high-tech based on Buichi Terasawa's comic of the same name, and *Guyver*, 'Out of Control' is loosely based on Yoshiaki Takaya's comic with a different story and continuity than the current dubbed series. It's a much darker, more violent adaptation."

Both one-shot OAV titles will be subtitled and released by L.A. Hero/Dark Images Entertainment and will retail for \$34.95. The 45-minute *Kabuto* is scheduled for a March release, with the approximately 55-minute *Guyver*, "Out of Control" to follow in June. ★

Corrections

In our November issue, *Maris the Chojo* (formerly *The Supergal*) was mistakenly listed as an AnimEigo release when it is in fact a U.S. Manga Corps™ release. We apologize for the error.

Hud's View

ANIMERICA's Own Essayist on the State of Our Art

James D. Hudnall is a comic book writer known for such works as *Espers*, *Interface*, *Lex Luthor: The Unauthorized Biography*, *The Psycho* and upcoming projects such as *Twister*, *Streets*, *Sinking* and *Harsh Realm*. He's been a Japanese animation fan since 1981 and does rewriting work on books such as *Mai the Psychic Girl*, *Silent Möbius* and the comic adaptation of *Macross II*. In each installment of *Hud's View*, he'll explore the relationship between the connected Japanese and American comic and anime industries.



Influences from Abroad, Part II

Last issue we talked about how American animation affected early Japanese comics and animation, and how later Japanese work affected American animation.

Now let's talk about movies.

In 1977, a film came out that almost single-handedly changed contemporary film. It was called *Star Wars*. Immediately after its debut, a score of sci-fi movies started popping up in the theaters. Many were pale imitations, but there were also superior films such as *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, which had distinct and mind-pummeling designs and feels.

It was only natural that they would become hits in Japan, a country that is probably more receptive to sci-fi than any other because it is so unabashedly technological. In Japan, design is a very popular career choice for artists. Many artists aspire to be great designers of machines and costumes. Many of these people were greatly inspired by what they saw in *Star Wars* and the films that followed, and they wanted to do something like that themselves.

Except, the film medium best offered to them in Japan was mostly TV animation.

So sci-fi became a bigger force in Japanese animation. Where before you had the sports cartoon, the kiddie cartoon, the giant robot show, now you had space epics such as *Space Cruiser Yamato*, *Galaxy Express 999*, *Mobile Suit Gundam* and *The Ideon*.

A lot of good stuff got made. Some of it really good stuff. Good enough and popular enough to get feature-length films made. And these eventually found their way into the hands of American collectors, who in turn showed it to others and they to their friends. Naturally, people in the film business ended up seeing this stuff.

From there you started to see influences popping up in American movies. Subtle at first. No so subtle later. For example, ever see *Young Sherlock Holmes*? How much do you want to bet Chris Columbus, the writer/director, has got the idea from watching Hayao Miyazaki's *Famous Holmes*? And scenes—it's often a fun pastime to look for scenes in American films that match scenes from Japanese animation movies. Every so often, you'll see them and they are so specific, it can't be a coincidence.

But it goes both ways, naturally. In the excellent, if not harrowing, film *Monster City*, we see demonic humans that can metamorph into hideous creatures. In one scene, the hero blasts the head right off one of these demons and the head sprouts legs. The eyes pop out and become mouths and stalks, and it starts running toward the hero.

Ever see John Carpenter's *The Thing*? An almost identical creature comes into being when a scientist infected with the alien virus morphs in an effort to get away from the hero. The "head creatures" couldn't be more alike.

They say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. The truth is, everyone steals from everyone. Shakespeare lifted lines from some of his contemporaries, and vice versa. Better to call it influences, since in effect, that's what it is. We see something we like, we think it's cool, so we try to recreate the magic. The saving grace is that most creative people try to do it *their* way, to put their personal stamp on it.

And there's no denying to these Western eyes that the Japanese have their own unique spin on things anyway. The cultural differences provide an interesting perspective that adds to the mix.

That's what keeps it interesting.

VIDEO CLIPS

AMERICA'S TOP TEN

The Bestselling Animated Videos, Compiled by
Capital City Distribution, Inc. (January, 1993)

- 1 **Macross II** • Volume 2
U.S. Renditions/L.A. Hero • \$24.95
- 2 **Doomed Megalopolis 1: Haunted Megalopolis**
Streamline Pictures • \$24.95
- 3 **Guyver** • Volume 2
U.S. Renditions/L.A. Hero • \$24.95
- 4 **Iczer-One** • Volume 1
Streamline Pictures • \$29.95
- 5 **3 x 3 Eyes** • Volume 3
Streamline Pictures • \$14.95
- 6 **3 x 3 Eyes** • Volume 4
Streamline Pictures • \$14.95
- 7 **Orguss** • Volume 2
U.S. Renditions/L.A. Hero • \$24.95
- 8 **Project A-Ko** (Dubbed Version)
U.S. Manga Corps • \$29.99
- 9 **Complete Robotech: Macross Saga**
Volume 3
Streamline Pictures • \$14.95
- 10 .. **Urusei Yatsura, "Inaba the Dreammaker & Lum's Future"** •
AnimEigo • \$39.95

Video Release Schedule Coming Soon in America

News on the latest releases from the American subtitled and dubbed animation industry. ★ = Unlisted/Unknown. ♥ = Series reviewed in this issue.

SCHEDULED RELEASE	FORMAT(VHS/LD)	TITLE	CATALOG NOS.	SOLDTHRU	PRICE(VHS/LD)	NOTES
3/3	Subtitled VHS	Mermaid Forest	USM 1044	U.S. Manga Corps	\$34.95	OAV based on comic by Rumiko Takahashi
3/3	Subtitled VHS	The Venus Wars	USM 1046	U.S. Manga Corps	\$39.95	Theatrical release
3/10	Subtitled VHS	Urusei Yatsura • Volume Six	AT092-106	AnimEigo	\$39.95	Episodes 21-24 of TV series
3/17	Subtitled VHS	Otaku No Video-Graffiti of Otaku Generation	AT093-002	AnimEigo	\$39.95	Gainax's anime "mockumentary"
3/24	Subtitled VHS	Urusei Yatsura, "Catch the Heart & Goat and Cheese"	AT092-206	AnimEigo	\$39.95	Third AnimEigo UY OAV release
MAR	Subtitled VHS	Devil Hunter Yohko • Volume One	VHSY/001	A.D. Vision	\$29.95	First release from new company; already available thru most major distributors
MAR	Subtitled VHS	Raven Tengu Kabuto	★	L.A. Hero/Dark Images Entertainment	\$34.95	Created by Buichi Terasawa; 45-min. OAV
MAR	Dubbed VHS	Ultraman, "Toward the Future" • Volume Three	UAV03	L.A. Hero/Ultra-Action Video	\$14.95	Third episode of Australian TV series
MAR	Dubbed VHS	Giant Robo	★	L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions	\$24.95	First 55-min. OAV in six-volume series
MAR	Dubbed VHS	Guyver • Volume Three	★	L.A. Hero/U.S. Renditions	\$24.95	Based on comic of same name
MAR	Dubbed VHS	The Complete Robotech: The Macross Saga • The Robotech Masters • The New Generation • Volumes Two	★	Streamline Pictures	\$19.95	Four dubbed Robotech episodes per tape (three series sold separately)
MAR	Subtitled/Dubbed VHS	Robotech: Macross • Southern Cross • Mospeada Perfect Collection • Volumes Two	★	Streamline Pictures	\$19.95	Two subtitled Japanese episodes w/corresponding Robotech episodes (three series sold separately)

With the increasing availability of English-translated titles from U.S.-based publishers, it's easier than ever for the non-Japanese reader to enter the exciting world of manga. Whether it's an English adaptation or an American original, each issue of **Manga Close-Up** brings you the latest news and reviews from the American manga industry.

Because Home is Where the Heart is... Maison Ikkoku by Rumiko Takahashi

First published ten years ago, manga wunderkind Rumiko Takahashi's heartwarming domestic comedy *Maison Ikkoku* will be released in English for the first time anywhere this June from Viz Comics.

Originally published in the Japanese manga magazine *Big Comic Spirits*, *Maison Ikkoku* has remained consistently popular among Takahashi's Japanese and American fans for nearly a decade. Beginning this June, Viz Comics will proudly present the time-tested favorite as a 40-page black and white limited series retailing for \$2.95 USA/\$4.00 CAN.

"We're happy to be doing it at last," says Managing Editor Satoru Fujii. "Viz has a long-standing commitment to bringing Takahashi's work to her English-speaking fans, and we feel the time is right for a more mature, non sci-fi story such as *Maison Ikkoku*."

"*Maison Ikkoku*" (lit., "house of one moment") is the name of a boarding house managed by a lovely young widow named Kyoko. Although it features no wacky aliens, no willy-nilly transsexuals and no espers, *Maison Ikkoku* is a nevertheless enchanting tale of day-to-day life and love the second time around.

"Part soap opera, part comedy, *Maison Ikkoku* is sure to find a place beside *Lum*, *Urusei Yatsura* and *Ranma 1/2* as Viz's bestselling Takahashi titles," says Fujii. ANIMERICA will follow the new series in detail in later issues.

Arkadyne, We Hardly Knew Ye

Despite high hopes and favorable reviews, plans for a Cybersuit Arkadyne graphic novel have been canceled, revealed Ianus Publications editor Claude J. Pelletier recently.

When the Montréal-based Ianus announced the graphic novel's release last July, it seemed as though the remaining three issues in the previously canceled *Arkadyne* monthly series would finally see the light of day. However, insufficient pre-orders have forced Ianus to suspend their plans for the six-part story by artist/creator Tim Eldred (*Lensman*, *Robotech II: Invid War*), pending further notice.

"We're very disappointed," said Pelletier. "We had expected a greater response from the fans. It's a great story and a great artist. We hope to complete the story sometime in the future, perhaps in 1993, if enough interest can be generated."

Those who would like to see the remainder of Eldred's "manga-style" series are encouraged to contact their comic retailer.

Extreme Close-Up

Intron Depot from Dark Horse Brings the Best of Both Worlds

Über artist/school teacher Masamune Shirow is almost as well-known among American anime and manga fans as he is in his native Japan. *Dark Horse Comics'* release of his 148-page tour de force *Intron Depot* continues that legend. Comic artist **Karl Altstaetter** reports.

Intron Depot is the first collected art book of Masamune Shirow, probably best known in America for his groundbreaking work in the cyberpunk manga classic *Appleseed*. Luckily for anyone who appreciates Shirow's work, *Dominion*, *Black Magic M-66* and *Orion* have also been published in English and selections from each are all featured in this gorgeous art collection covering every stage of his artistic progression. With samples of everything from fan art to accomplished professional work, *Intron Depot* proves there's more to Shirow than simple manga art.

Released early last September from Dark Horse Comics, *Intron Depot* brings readers the best of both worlds with Shirow's own captions published not only in Japanese but in English as well, expertly translated and edited by San Francisco-based Studio Proteus. It's an all-too-rare opportunity for American fans to hear an artist's impressions of his own work. The

148-page collection will retail at \$39.95 USA/\$47.95 CAN, and features 226 illustrations (193 in full color).

In addition to displaying Shirow's mastery of mechanical drawing, the book also highlights his ability as a fantasy artist. With emphasis on selections from *Orion* and several other fantasy-related pieces, the reader is exposed to Shirow's vivid imagination and versatility. To round out the book, several monochromatic technical pieces are included.

Intron Depot is one of the finest art books to come out of Japan in a long time. It thoroughly covers Shirow's work and gives the reader rare insight into the man behind the legend. My only complaint is, where is *Intron Depot*, Volume Two?

Karl Altstaetter is a long-time fan of Japanese animation and a snappy dresser. He is also a comic artist whose work has appeared in titles such as *Uncanny X-Men* and *Wildcats*. Look for his new series *Q-Unit*, coming this fall from Harris Comics.



Japan's Manga Top Ten

- 1 Leisure Club • 13**
Yukari Ichijo • Shueisha • ¥390
- 2 How Wonderfully Japanese • 9**
Himuro & Yamaguchi • Hakusensha • ¥390
- 3 Five Star Stories • 5**
Mamoru Nagano • Kadokawa Shoten • ¥900
- 4 Yawara! • 14**
Naoki Urasawa • Shogakukan • ¥500
- 5 X • 2**
Clamp • Kadokawa • ¥390
- 6 Crayon Shin-Chan • 4**
Yoshihito Usui • Futabasha • ¥550
- 7 Dragon Quest • 13**
Sanjo and Hirada • Shueisha • ¥390
- 8 Shonen Ashibe • 6**
Hiromi Morishita • Shueisha • ¥500
- 9 Moonchild • 12**
Reiko Shimizu • Hakusensha • ¥390
- 10 Living Game • 6**
Mochiru Hoshisato • Shogakukan • ¥500

The Bestselling Comics, Compiled by Books Nippan, Japan (February, 1993)

Subtitled and Dubbed Anime Review
BEST OF THE
West

Superdimensional Century Orguss

Sold Thru U.S. Renditions / L.A. Hero	Format Dubbed VHS	Price \$29.95	Length 35 episodes at 22 min. each
Release Date On Sale Now	Translation TMS	Notes First tape contains three episodes	

Superdimensional Century Orguss is a tale of a world torn asunder by a temporal disruption into many coexisting realities. Los Angeles-based subtitled/dubbing firm U.S. Renditions, hoping to release all 35 episodes dubbed in English, has so far progressed to the sixth, enough to establish the basic storyline.

Kei Katsuragi is a brash nineteen-year-old fighter pilot, battling on one side of a military conflict over possession of an orbital elevator. He finds himself blasted by a huge dimensional bomb into a new world of conflict between the peaceful Emaan trader race and the brutally dictatorial Chiram [*the alternate rendition "Terram" is based on chi, the first syllable in the original Japanese, being written with the logograph for "Earth," thus "Terra + ram" = "Terram"—Ed.*], with handfuls of other alternate-Earth aliens mixed in. Somehow, Kei and fellow pilot Olsen Bern, also transported by the temporal explosion, are keys to the riddle of the various realities.

Within the first few episodes, Kei reluctantly joins a group of Emaan aboard their enormous armed hovercraft, the *Glomar*. His damaged fighter, a Bronco II, is rebuilt into the series' title mecha, the Orguss. Kei's principal contact on the *Glomar* is Mimsy Laarz, a seventeen-year-old girl with long tentacular antennae growing out from her hair. They easily provide equal shares of awkward teenage boy-girl interactions. While the characters are nowhere near being three-dimensional, in this version they are at least more bearable than most American kid-vid.

From a production standpoint, the current crop of English-dubbed anime is still in its infancy regarding voice-acting. Few releasing companies in the U.S. have been able to

The American anime industry has come a long way since the early days of Astro Boy. Several U.S.-based companies are making it easier than ever for non-Japanese-speaking fans to keep up with their favorite shows. In this section, Animerica takes a look at the best in English subs and dubs.

marshal the talent necessary to make anime voices distinct and interesting. This disadvantage, coupled with various technical exigencies, results in much of the early *Orguss* dialogue sounding rushed and dryly read. This is nothing new; much classic dubbed anime sounds like one big run-on sentence. (I prefer subtitled anime, since it preserves the original flavor of the film.)

Dubbing is by far the harder technique to master, and should be used only when it can be done to best effect. The live-action submarine film *Das Boot* illustrates two points—the subtitled film was extremely powerful in the original German, while its dubbed version, *The Boat*, managed to sound natural even in English because many of the film's German actors did their own dialogue.

Although *Orguss* offers many characters who sound frustratingly alike and very American, Jabby, the dinosauroid *Glomar* crew member played by Steve Blum, is thoroughly engaging, sounding a bit like actor Geoffrey Holder (remember the Seven-Up "Uncola" commercials?).

In a long episodic saga, one is not usually afforded the luxury of smooth, detailed animation. The liberal use of cycles and repeated sequences are evident

but not unexpected; the cel drawing is extremely sketchy in places. Nonetheless, the results could be considered good for 1983.

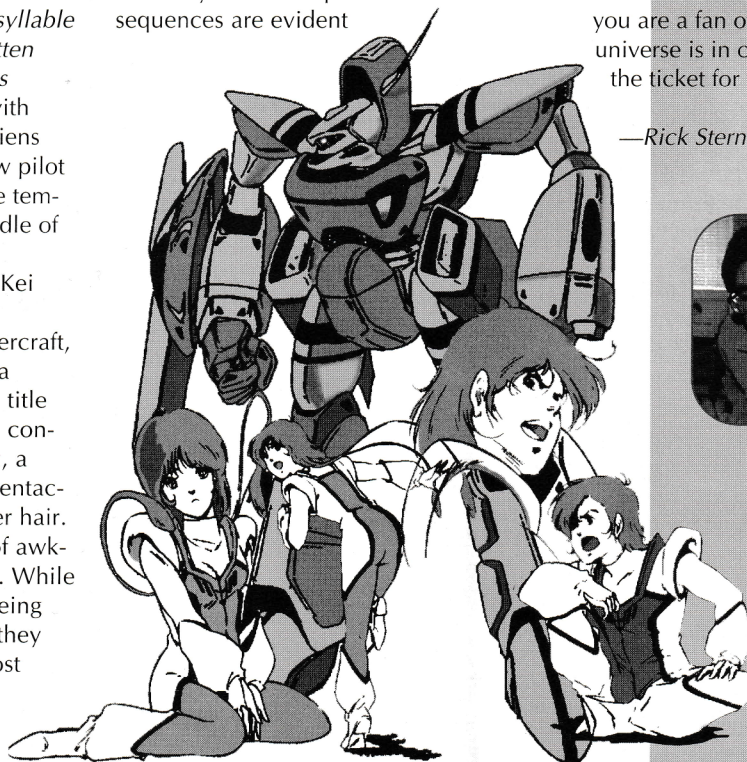
The design fascination with giant transforming robots is well expressed with the Orguss fighting machine. Obvious comparisons to *Macross*, besides the obvious character designs, may certainly stem from the basic fighter-to-robot configuration, notably the "Gerwalk" mode seen in *Macross'* well-known Valkyrie (itself derived from an F-14 Tomcat).

The usual inventories of missiles, cluster submunitions, and energy weapons are all here for the mecha-hungry fan. The style of the Orguss is slightly more organic than its *Macross* cousin, and continues the practice of transforming complex mechanisms instantly, with seeming disregard for engineering practicalities. In other words, just have fun with it.

The hi-fi audio quality is acceptable, although the stereo separation is not easily discerned (the original series was recorded in mono, with stereo added for these tapes).

Will reality be repaired? Will good triumph over evil? Will U.S. Renditions release a dozen cassettes in this saga? If you are a fan of boy-meets-girl while the universe is in chaos, *Orguss* may be just the ticket for you.

—Rick Sternbach



Rick Sternbach is best known for his work as senior illustrator/technical consultant on Star Trek:

The Next Generation as well as the STTNG spin-off Deep Space Nine. He has twice been honored with science fiction's prestigious Hugo Award for Best Artist, and won an Emmy as an assistant art director on the PBS series Cosmos. His list of favorite anime goes at least as long as his art credits, and when he's not wheedling STTNG's writers into including anime in-jokes in the scripts, he studies Japanese with his young son Josh through his abundant anime laser disc collection.

US Renditions

Japanese Animation Home Video Line

ENGLISH DUBBED VIDEOS

PRODUCED BY L.A. HERO

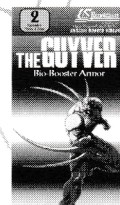
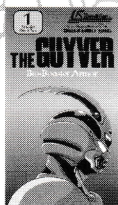
ENGLISH SUBTITLED VIDEOS



SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS, MACROSS II
2 volumes, two 30 min episodes per volume. Eighty years have passed since the Zentraedi war. The descendents of *Macross* are threatened by new alien aggressors. Once again the *SDF-01 Macross* must arise to defend humanity. Designs by series co-creator Haruhiko Mikimoto.
Contains profanity.

SUPER DIMENSION CENTURY, ORGUSS

2 volumes, three 30 min episodes on Vol. 1; two 30 min episodes on Vol. 2. Kei Katsuragi of the Freedom Space Corps is thrown through time into a strange future world. He must battle hostile forces using his transformable fighter, *Orguss*. From the creators of *Macross*.
Contains profanity, violence, slight nudity.



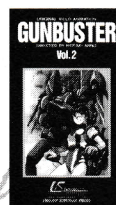
BIO-BOOSTER ARMOR, GUYVER

2 volumes, two 30 min episodes per volume. Sho Fukamachi accidentally fuses with the alien armor *Guyver*. Now he must battle corporate evil and biomorphic Zoanoids in order to survive! Based on the comic by Yoshiki Takaya.
Contains violence.

FIGHT! ICZER-ONE
2 volumes, two 30 min episodes on Vol. 1 (Acts 1 & 2); one 45 min episode on Vol. 2 (Act 3). Nagisa Kano is an ordinary Japanese school girl. Suddenly, she is thrust into the middle of an invasion by the alien C'thuwulf. To survive she must become the partner of Earth's defender, *Iczer-One*! Created by Toshihiro Hirano (*Dangaio*, *Megazone 23*) Dub produced by U.S. Renditions.
Contains nudity & profanity.



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GUNBUSTER-Aim for the Top!

3 volumes, two 30 minute episodes per tape. Noriko Takaya is a young girl in the Earth Space Force. She is chosen to co-pilot the *Gunbuster*, the ultimate fighting machine. Noriko must defend Earth from aliens!
Contains nudity.



APPLESEED ova feature 70 minutes. Based on Masamune Shirow's cyberpunk comic series, SWAT team members Deunan and Briareos battle bioroid terrorists in the post-apocalyptic world of Olympus. **Contains violence.**



BLACK MAGIC M-66 ova feature 60 minutes. Masamune Shirow's story of a military android who wants to terminate a young girl. Creator Shirow directed this acclaimed animation feature. **Contains nudity and violence.**



DANGAIO Parts 1, 2, & 3

3 volumes, one episode per tape, 45 min each. Four young psychics must battle the Bunker space pirates. They are aided by their psychically powered mecha, *Dangaio*! Designs by Shoji Kawamori of *Macross*.
Contains profanity.

NOT RATED, PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED

QTY.	TITLE	RETAIL	MEMBER PRICE
	MACROSS II VOL. 1	\$24.95	\$21.95
	MACROSS II VOL. 2	\$24.95	\$21.95
	ORGUSS VOL.1	\$29.95*	\$25.95
	ORGUSS VOL.2	\$24.95	\$21.95
	GUYVER VOL.1	\$24.95	\$21.95
	GUYVER VOL.2	\$24.95	\$21.95
	ICZER-ONE VOL.1	\$24.95	\$21.95
	ICZER-ONE VOL.2	\$24.95	\$21.95

Charges - Visa/MC Only Personal Check or Money Order

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Signature

Tel () Fan Club BA#

Name

Address

City State/Zip

QTY.	TITLE	RETAIL	MEMBER PRICE
	APPLESEED	\$34.95	\$29.95
	BLACK MAGIC M-66	\$34.95	\$29.95
	GUNBUSTER VOL.1	\$34.95	\$29.95
	GUNBUSTER VOL.2	\$34.95	\$29.95
	GUNBUSTER VOL.3	\$34.95	\$29.95
	DANGAIO VOL.1	\$34.95	\$29.95
	DANGAIO VOL.2	\$34.95	\$29.95
	DANGAIO VOL.3	\$34.95	\$29.95
SUBTOTAL			
8.25% Tax if Ca. Res.			
Shipping			
Membership fee			\$12.00
Total			

Ordering Instructions

Continental U.S.: 1 video \$3.50. Please add .50 for each additional tape. *Alaska & Hawaii* 1 Video \$7.00. Please add \$1.75 for each additional video. 2nd day UPS shipping only. Canada: Money orders and personal checks in US dollars (payable through a US branch of your Canadian bank) only. Sent via UPS ground service. 1 video \$7.00. Please add \$2.00 for each additional video. All items sent by UPS, please wait 4-6 weeks. No COD orders. (UPS exceptions, PO, APO, FPO, Box addresses will be shipped via 4th class, US Postal service. Sorry NO OVERSEAS orders. Return copy of this form plus payment to

BOOKS NIPPAN

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More than just entertainment, anime is one of Japan's most valuable (and enjoyable) forms of cross-cultural communication. In this section, ANIMERICA asks Japanese and U.S. industry professionals to evaluate the latest in this diverting and enriching art form.

Video Girl Ai

Sold Thru
Shueisha/
Victor Music

Format
VHS/LD

Price
¥4500
¥7800 (w/tax)

Length
Six episodes
at 30-min. each

Release Date
On Sale Now

Notes
LD contains two
episodes per disc

Regardless of whether it's TV, direct-release or theatrical, most Japanese animation is based on original manga found in Japan's many comic periodicals. The reason is simple—animation based on popular, well-known manga provides a built-in audience.

Among the many comic magazines which provide these would-be animation stories is *Shonen Jump*, published by industry megalith Shueisha. *Jump* is remarkable not only for its unshakable hold as Japan's (and the world's) best-selling weekly, but for the large number of high-profile manga first published within its pages which have subsequently become animated features.

Video Girl Ai is one story Shueisha decided to make into an OAV all on its own through its "Jump Video" line. Only recently ending a long serialization which began in late 1988, *Video Girl* is based on the original story by Masakazu Katsura (*Wingman*), and is well-known even in America for the "cute factor" of its main female character, Ai Amano (voice-acted by Megumi Hayashibara, female "Ranma" in *Ranma 1/2*).

Moteuchi Yota (Tsuyoshi Kusao, "Ramunes" in *NG Knight Ramune & 40*) stumbles across what seems to be a newly opened video rental shop after the girl he

has a crush on, Moemi Hayakawa (Yui Amano, "Kyoko Aoi" in *New Century GPX Cyber Formula*), professes her love for upperclassman Takashi Niimai (Koji Tsujitani, "Kubo" in *Otaku Video 1982, 1985*). Yota is given a tape titled "I'll Comfort You—Ai Amano" which the unhappy teen can't resist playing in his (malfunctioning) video deck.

As the title indicates, the lovely Ai emerges from the television screen and announces she'll be staying with Yota for the next three months in order to help him get over his crush. As the feisty Pollyanna torn between her duty and an impossible love for Yota, Hayashibara delivers a marvelous performance. Born from a damaged VCR, Ai is neither so docile nor so demur as Yota might have wished, but there are unexpected benefits—such as Ai's independence of will, and her ability to feel love. Just when things start getting interesting, Moemi decides that maybe Yota isn't so unattractive after all....

Animation director Takayoshi Goto has succeeded in keeping the artistic quality very high, managing to maintain a remarkably high level of dramatic tension. Scriptwriter Satoru Akahori applies just the right touch of light eroticism and humor. Opening and ending themes performed by teen idol Noriko Sakai give the OAV a lyrical, dreamy quality, and Toru Okada's soundtrack is first-rate.

Video Girl Ai is well worth seeing as one of last year's best OAVs. Strongly recommended.

—Yoshitaka Ishigami

The Spirit of Wonder Ms. China's Melancholy

Sold Thru
Toshiba EMI

Format
VHS/LD

Price
¥9800
(w/tax)

Length
42 min.

Release Date
On Sale Now

Notes
One-Shot OAV

Back in 1983, the year the first original animation video *Dallos* was released, OAVs were thought to be a new category in which quality animation could be created on high budgets and a less-demanding schedule. In fact, much of the genre's best animation has been produced for just this reason.

Recently, however, several animation studios have taken advantage of the OAV format to produce cheap, poor-quality excuses for merchandise tie-ins. In direct contrast to this trend is *Spirit of Wonder*, which required over a year and a half to create and many of the industry's finest talents.

Based on an original comic by Kenji Tsuruta, relatively unknown due to its infrequent publication, *Spirit of Wonder* was serialized in three segments from January to May, 1990 in Kodansha's *Comic Afternoon*. The comic has yet to be released as a graphic novel (the expected follow-up for popular titles), and despite the long wait between installments, Tsuruta's unique outlook and sizable artistic skills have nonetheless managed to attract a fan following in Japan.

Spirit of Wonder is set in a fin de siècle English pub managed single-handedly by a woman named China (Noriko Hidaka, "Nadia" in *Nadia of the*



Mysterious Seas). Scientist and self-styled genius Dr. Breckenridge (Michio Hazama, "Captain Gloval," *Superdimensional Fortress Macross*), lives above the pub with his assistant Floyd (Hiroyuki Shibamoto, "Takahata" in *Esper Mami*), for whom China secretly yearns. But Floyd is smitten with a florist named Lilly and China's love seems hopeless. That is, until Floyd gives her a ring made of moonstone....

Direction is by Mitsuru Hongo, with animation direction by Yoshiaki Yanagida and art direction by Hiromasa Ogura (*Royal Space Force*, *Wings of Oneamis*). Together, the three have succeeded in bringing the warm and delicate atmosphere of the original comic to life. The excellent color coordination of Miyoko Ichinose truly recreates the "sense of wonder" found in the Golden Age of American science fiction during the 1940-50s.

Unlike most OAVs, *Sense of Wonder*'s exceptional soundtrack was composed and created *after* the film was produced, a time-consuming but marvelously effective way to produce a high-quality musical score. (Anyone wishing to read more about the making of *Sense of Wonder* is advised to go to their back issues of *Anime V* magazine, where Tsuruta's article "The Breckenridge Paper" was published in monthly installments from March to July, 1992.)

All things considered, *Sense of Wonder* is a representative example of 1992's better OAVs.

—Yoshitaka Ishigami

Bastard!! "The Destructive God of Darkness"

Sold Thru

Shueisha/Pioneer

Format

VHS/LD

Price

¥4500/¥7800
(w/tax)

Length

30 min./60 min.

Release Date

Vols. 1-4 On Sale Now
(Vol. 4 LD scheduled
4/25/93)

Notes

LD contains two
episodes per disc

The road to animation for Kazushi Hagiwara's hack 'n' slash D & D™ comic fantasy *Bastard!!* has been long and uncertain. Originally serialized in *Weekly Shonen Jump* in 1988, the popular series was in peril of being canceled several times due to Hagiwara's well-known perfectionism and chronically late deadlines.

After being terminated from *Jump* in 1989, Hagiwara made peace with his editors at Shueisha, who pragmatically decided to run the comic in their *Jump Special*, a quarterly edition of *Weekly Shonen Jump*. Unfortunately, plans for an animated version that had been in the works were also terminated. It would not be until August of 1992 that the series would finally see release as an OAV.

"The Wizard of Explosion and Flames," the first in six planned episodes, is a combination of fantasy role-playing games, heavy metal music and scenes from special-effects films. So far, the series has succeeded in preserving the light and comical touch of the originals; however, it falls a little short when it comes to expressing the epic scope of the wars between the wizards as depicted in the comic. This probably has more to do with budget limitations than the talents of the animation staff.

Bastard!! is animated by the Osaka-based production house "Anime R." Direction is by Katsuhito Akiyama (*Gall Force*, *Bubblegum Crisis*), with animation direction by Moriyasu Taniguchi (*SPT Layzner*) and Takahiro Kimura. Character design is by Hiroyuki Kitazume (*Gundam Double Z*, *Gaiearth*), with background music by anime/special-effects films composer Kohei Tanaka.

Hagiwara is said to have been very enthusiastic about *Bastard!!*'s proposed jump to the OAV format, yet in a recent interview he expressed his ambivalence with the final result. But this isn't the first time he's come up against the restrictions of the medium.

One of the manga industry's more interesting open secrets is the fact that Hagiwara publishes *dojinshi* (original fan-

press comics, often based on pre-existing characters) clandestinely. There was reportedly a time when he published *dojinshi* quite openly, but heavy pressure from his Shueisha editors forced him to go underground.

Each of the OAV's major voice roles are well-cast. Kazuki Yao ("Judo Ashita," *Gundam Double Zeta*) stars as the egotistical 400-year-old magic user Dark Schneider, with the voluptuous and scantily clad heroine, Tia Note Yoko, played by Yuka Koyama ("Kiki," *Vampire Wars*). Konami Yoshida ("Kotschun Hein," *Gundam F-91*) plays Princess Sheila, and Ninja Master Gara is by Tetsuaki Genda ("Umi Bozu," *City Hunter*).

Perhaps a key to appreciating the OAV series lies in the story's lightness, which never for a moment becomes too complex or heavy. Many clever ideas not found in the original comic are incorporated such as an opening narration in English and the impressive effects used for animating the magic spells. Overall, *Bastard!!* is quite enjoyable.

—Yoshitaka Ishigami
and Yoshiyuki Karahashi

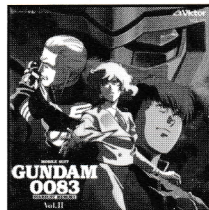
As an organizer of Comic Market, Japan's largest comic convention/swap meet, "Best of the East" anime reviewer **Yoshitaka Ishigami** is an integral part of the anime and manga scene. He is an editor of "Ranma in America," the first comic created entirely by American fans to be sold at Comic Market, and is rumored to possess one of the biggest video tape libraries in Japan. (Did we mention he's also a practicing gastroenterologist?)

CD Review



The Compact View

In Japan, animation soundtracks are every bit as legitimate as the latest from Ryuichi Sakamoto. Even the most humble of anime features are certain to be accompanied by an "official" soundtrack. Each issue in **The Compact View**, music enthusiast **Chris Keller** helps you to understand the often confusing world of CDs by reviewing both Japanese and domestic releases.



**Mobile Suit Gundam 0083,
Stardust Memory
BGM Collection, Vol. II**

Mitsuo Ogita
Victor VICL-271
46 min.
¥3000 (w/tax)

This second volume of music from *Stardust Memory* is the best BGM album you're likely to hear this year. With some great vocals by Mio, one of the most recognizable voices in the industry (*Aura Battler Dunbine*, *Heavy Metal L-Gaim*), *Stardust Memory* offers some beautiful instrumentals and two dynamic pop songs.

The album starts out with a slow, melodious piece by composer Mitsuo Ogita called "The Earth Circle," used in the more contemplative moments of the series. The opening title theme, "Men of Destiny," kicks in next with synthesized horn blasts and screaming electric guitar. Mio's voice is more than powerful enough to keep up and helps the song capture the intensity of the series.

"Oblivion," an English version of "Men of Destiny," also appears on the album. The English lyrics are by Linda Henrick, whose work has appeared in *Area 88*, *City Hunter* and the *Dirty Pair* movie. "Star Bright," a love ballad which amply showcases Mio's emotional range, is especially good.

Of the instrumentals by Ogita, "Nina Purpleton" and "In Von Braun" are two of the most memorable from the series; their bittersweet melodies really help set the tone for the darker action tracks such as "Solar System II" and "Battle of Solomon Sea." Overall, this collection of *Gundam* music offers a wide range of emotionally satisfying music as good as anything the saga has produced so far.



Ever wanted to play a character from your favorite anime or manga? Video games can add a whole new dimension to enjoying anime. Each month, ANIMERICA's video game experts share tips and advice to help you achieve your highest score ever.



U.N. Squadron

System	Type	Manufacturer
SNES /Super Famicom	Shoot 'Em Up	Capcom
Price	Available	Notes
\$59.95/\$85.00	On Sale Now U.S./Japan	SNES Version of "Area 88" for Super Famicom

Betrayed by his best friend and torn away from the only life he had known, Shin Kazama is forced to join a mercenary air force where only his skill as a pilot can keep him alive. In the airfield known as "Area 88," desperation is high and everything is for sale...and life is sold cheapest of all.

Originally a long-running manga series popular in both Japanese and English editions, former Leiji Matsumoto (*Space Cruiser Yamato*) apprentice Kaoru Shintani's *Area 88* went on to become a successful OAV series and later, an arcade game on which the Super Famicom version is based. For release on the American Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES), the game was renamed "U.N. Squadron" and features English dialogue adapted from the original Japanese with slight revisions. Although the two games are for the most part identical, we'll be concentrating on "U.N. Squadron" for this month's review.

BASIC PLAY

"U.N. Squadron" is in essence a shooter-type game, with numerous levels and appropriate "bosses" at ending stages. Game lives are organized two ways: (1) you have multiple lives, but one shot will kill you; (2) you have only one life, but you've got an "energy meter" from which life is deducted incrementally with each hit. After being "killed," you have three chances to continue the game.

THE CHARACTERS



Shin Kazama
Shin's main advantage is that the power levels on his Vulcan guns build up the most quickly.



Mickey Simon

Known for his ability to load and carry the highest amounts of weaponry.



Greg Gates

Blessed by a Rasputin-like constitution, combat is his friend—of the three, Greg takes the least damage.

Tactics and Notes

Your mission is to thwart the efforts of the terrorist group Project 4. During the mission briefing, Commander Saki displays a tactical map of nearby enemy forces, following with a brief description.

To play, a jet fighter must be purchased (additional armaments optional). In the original story, one way to leave Area 88 was to earn \$1.5 million in enemy kills. Faithful to the manga, all players start off with an initial balance of \$3000, with which McCoy the weapons dealer makes available six fighters. Unlike the manga, "buying" a particular fighter in the game is actually closer to licensing it, since its loss in combat does not force the player to purchase a replacement.

With an increased budget, additional "licenses" may be purchased but cannot be resold, a budget tie-up and seeming setback until you consider that some fighters are better suited for certain missions. The variety might prove beneficial. Eleven different weapons are available to choose from, although all fighters obviously share different armament capabilities.

Most shoot-'em-up-type games generally resemble one another. So what separates this from other shooters? "U.N. Squadron" has a heavy manga/anime influence, already a strong incentive for fans of the medium, and features storylines of almost RPG (role-playing game) quality.

An incredible number of combinations to win exists: three characters; six fighters; up to eleven additional weapons (which in turn may or may not be armed); and three levels of difficulty, each with a different ending. For advanced players, go to the level select under "Options." Press buttons X and A simultaneously on controller 2, and use controller 1 to select "Game" level. But beware! Only a true "mercenary of hell" can succeed here.

Overall, "U.N. Squadron" is an excellent classic just waiting to be rediscovered.

—Eugene Lee

Fast-Forward Japan... New and Upcoming Video Game Releases

Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventures

System	Type	Manufacturer
Super Famicom (SNES)	Role-Playing	Cobra Team
Price	Available	Notes
¥9500	March 1993	One-Player Game with Battery Backup

A unique type of role-playing game based on the manga currently being serialized in *Weekly Shonen Jump* by Hirohiko Araki. Players must hunt and destroy a vampire-like creature using "stands," a ghost-like apparition that only other stand users can see. The stands take a variety of forms (if any at all) according to a character's power. According to the game's press release, visual sequences are presented mainly in cinemascope size (similar to theatrical letterboxing) in order to preserve the original feeling of the series. Different from other games in that combat sequences using stands are based off characters' will power and bio-rhythms, leading to unique situations each time the character engages in combat.

Cyborg 009

System	Type	Manufacturer
Sega Mega CD System	Action	Riot
Price	Available	Notes
¥7800	March 1993	One-Player Game

Action game based on the ever-popular *Cyborg 009* manga by Shotaro Ishinomori (*Kamen Rider*) about nine prototype cyborgs originally created for an evil organization, only to be set free to fight for justice by their creator. Based on original storylines from volumes five and six of the comic (available from Akita Shoten). Fans of the series can look forward to playing all nine cyborgs, each with a unique ability. Game manufacturer Riot is well-known for stunning visual sequences.

3 x 3 Eyes—The Legend of Trinetra

System	Type	Manufacturer
Sega Mega CD System	Role-Playing	Sega
Price	Available	Notes
No Price Set	Spring 1993	One-Player Game

Based on the comic of the same title. The player controls the main characters Pai and Yakumo as they search for a way to turn Pai, a "Sanjiyan" or tri-clops, into an ordinary human being. Includes over twenty minutes of animation with scenarios from the manga series such as Japan and Hong Kong.

Ultraman Seven

System	Type	Manufacturer
Super Famicom (SNES)	Side-View Action	Bandai
Price	Available	Notes
No Price Set	No Release Date Set	Includes Bonus Stages and Two-Player Vs. Mode

A sort of sequel to the previous "Ultraman" game (the Japanese release had the original Ultraman as the main character; the U.S. release had the Australian version). Game play will be the same side-view action, but this time around there'll also be bonus stages and a two-player versus mode.

—Toshifumi Yoshida

Announcing the Winner of Our "What's in a Name" Contest! Monthly Readers' Page Animessages

Last issue, we asked you to help us decide upon a name for our Readers' Page. After thinking it over and discussing it among the editorial staff, we finally realized that there could be no other name but the one suggested by **Thomas E. Harris of Owings Mills, Maryland**. Your glorious, full-color *Macross II*, "Lovers Again" poster is in the mail. (Many of you suggested "Animail." We loved the name and thought it was a natural, but then so did England's *Anime UK* magazine. If we used it, fellow editor Helen McCarthy would never forgive me.) Thanks go to everyone who sent in suggestions, comments, or criticism. We wish we could print each and every letter, but then we'd have less room for our anime and manga features! So we'll print just a few of our favorites here.

Dear ANIMERICA,

I enjoyed the first issue of ANIMERICA, especially the article on *Macross II*. It was nice to finally learn a little bit about my favorite character designer, Haruhiko Mikimoto.

On page 13 there is a listing of all the *Macross* merchandise that ever existed. Do you know if the *Macross II* poster is still available, and if I can order it?

Also, why is *Macross II* only six episodes long? That sounds way too short. Will there be another series after the six episodes? Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely yours,

Rudy K. Beran
Concord, California

According to L.A. Hero, the length of the *Macross II* series reflects the current trend in the Japanese anime industry toward shorter OAV series. A new six-episode *Macross OAV* series is rumored for late '93, although details are still vague at this point. More news as it develops. The oversized, full-color *Macross II* poster should still be available at your local comics retailer.

Dear Editor Trish,

I'm writing to tell you how much I liked ANIMERICA, No. 0. I loved the Mikimoto cover, and I liked what I saw. I knew that there were anime-related games in Japan for the Nintendo systems, but this is the first time I've seen hints for them (in English, that is). Can you tell me if the rumor is true that the Nintendo systems in Japan are different from the ones in America? Can the average American Nintendo owner buy and play a Japanese Nintendo cartridge?

Overall, I like ANIMERICA because of the total variety for the price. In this first preview issue, you have given me (and the other readers) manga strips, interviews with famous personalities, and general news of the manga and anime currently on the market and of those in the works. Not bad, not bad at all. The fact that the magazine will be monthly is even better. I'm looking forward to this March.

Stay insane,

Joe Holsinger
Pickerington, Ohio

The American SNES and Japanese Nintendo systems are different. I know many American SNES owners who've surgically removed the tabs on their SNES system to play Japanese carts, but Capcom USA wanted me to mention that this is not recommended and will void the warranty on your SNES. Buy an adapter instead—they're available for both systems and let you play American carts on your Japanese system and vice versa.

Dear Editor,

Your first issue of ANIMERICA really hit it right on the mark. Your interview with Mikimoto, perspectives, history, reviews and the two full-feature manga are the sort of things I expected to find in a Japanese anime magazine, but it's all in English so I can understand every word.

I thoroughly enjoy the two English-translated manga of *Supergal* and *AD Police*. I am already familiar with the *Supergal* story, but it's much more interesting when you understand the dialogue. *AD Police* was equally as good, but the artwork was muddy; perhaps there was a printing error.

Equally as important as the review and the manga are the history and perspective provided by articles such as "Hud's View" and "From the Forest." I view anime as a form of communication that bridges the two different cultures of East and West. I am always curious about why fans of both cultures find anime interesting. I hope that I will be seeing more perspectives and history in future issues.

Yours Truly,

Paul Siu
Philadelphia, PA

According to Viz Comics' Managing Editor Satoru Fujii, Tony Takezaki's work is especially difficult to reproduce because unlike most

other manga artists, he actually paints in the grey rather than using zipatone (he eventually starts using it in later issues). In the meantime we've been working on the situation on our end. We hope that you find this issue's installment of *AD Police* at least a little clearer.

Dear Trish,

I recently bought a copy of your magazine ANIMERICA. I liked it a lot and will probably subscribe.

My most recent video purchase was Masamune Shirow's *Black Magic M-66*. Although I was very pleased overall, I did not enjoy watching it as much as I have enjoyed other movies in my collection. I was hesitant about buying it in the first place for only one reason—like many others, this movie is subtitled.

I believe that dubbed videos would expand the viewership in the Japanese animated market, thus making it more profitable for both the movie companies and voice-actors. Dubbed movies would also give the fan more of what they want—more high-quality Japanese animation which they can enjoy watching in English so they can appreciate both the animation and the story at the same time.

It costs more to dub a video than to subtitle—about how much more? Are there are any contributing cost factors such as special concessions for either the movie company or the voice-actors? Why is it that we don't see more English-dubbed videos on the shelves? How long does it take for a subtitled video to become a dubbed video?

Sincerely,

Wayne Garlock
Milford, Connecticut

According to U.S. Renditions, it costs approximately five times more to dub than subtitle. As for why there aren't more dubs on the shelves, it's because more companies are releasing subs than dubs (at least for now). However, there's a strong trend toward dubbing these days and you're right, Wayne—it may well mean more money for anime voice-actors. And that's something you won't hear me complaining about...

This marks the end of our first letters page. I've enjoyed hearing from you and hope that you'll keep sending in your comments. With your help, we can make this a lively forum for discussion of anime, manga and related issues. See you in thirty!

—Trish

ANIMERICA welcomes letters from our readers. Address correspondence to: Letters to the Editor, c/o Viz Comics, P.O. Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107. We are unable to answer letters individually. Concise, typed letters have the best chance of being published. We reserve the right to edit for space or clarity.

The Animessages Poll

Our thanks to everyone who responded to the questionnaire in our premiere issue. Among other questions, we asked you to list your favorite anime shows, characters and manga. Here's what you told us:

Ranking	Your Favorite Anime Shows	Ranking	Your Favorite Manga
1	<i>Superdimensional Fortress Macross</i>	1	<i>Appleseed</i> (Studio Proteus)
2	TIED FOR SECOND PLACE, IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER <i>Bubblegum Crisis/Macross II</i>	2	<i>Ranma 1/2</i> (Viz)
3	<i>Silent Möbius</i>	3	<i>Macross II</i> (Viz)

Ranking	Your Favorite Anime Characters
1	Ranma Saotome
2	Priss (BGC)
3	The Dirty Pair

You know what they say...practice makes perfect. And we want ANIMERICA to be as perfect as we—and you, our readers—can make it. Please take a moment to answer this month's questionnaire, letting us know which features, columns and departments you liked (or didn't like). In the meantime, keep sending in your top three (not five) favorite anime shows, characters and manga. We'll print the results in each following issue. Send your completed questionnaires and your "anime/manga favorites" polls by **April 30, 1993** to:

ANIMERICA Readers' Poll
c/o Viz Comics
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, California 94107

Remember—if it's Anime in America, it's Gotta be ANIMERICA!™ We look forward to hearing from you soon.

NAME: _____ AGE: _____ SEX: M F

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On a Scale 1-10	ANIMERICA March '93
	Feature Article: Spotlight on <i>Mobile Suit Gundam</i>
	The ANIMERICA Interview: "Tomino's Turning Point"
	"Timeline to the Universal Century," A Gundamaniac's Guide
	"The Controversial World of Making Anime Sacred Cows into (Translation) Hamburger," by Fred Schodt
	<i>Gundam 0083</i> , "Zeon's Fading Light" Close-Up
	Manga Feature: <i>AD Police</i> by Tony Takezaki
	Manga Feature: <i>Mermaid Forest</i> by Rumiko Takahashi
	Dateline: Japan
	Dateline: America
	Manga Close-Up

	Best of the West
	Best of the East
	The Compact View
	From the Editor
	Between the Covers
	TV Top Ten, Japan
	From the Forest
	Coming Soon in Japan
	Video Clips: Japan
	Hud's View
	Video Clips: America
	Coming Soon in America
	Manga Top Ten
	AV Interface
	Readers' Page
	In Our Next Issue...

In the Next Issue of ANIMERICA...!

Now printed in COLOR! Be sure not to miss a single one of these exciting features!

Anime Feature

The Wacky World of Rumiko Takahashi

Uniquely showcasing the anime and manga wunderkind in **The ANIMERICA Interview**; a comprehensive survey of the Rumiko phenomena in America with background by comics superstar **Gerard Jones**; plus "The Highest-Profile Otaku in the World," a special conversation with MTV video star and anime megafan **Matthew Sweet** (including the true story about the tattoo!).

Manga Features

Third Installment in the Dark World of Bubblegum Crisis

AD POLICE

The cyberpunk action continues with the Advanced Defense Police's fight against the evil Genom conglomerate. Based on the popular OAV series of the same name by **Tony Takezaki**. An ANIMERICA exclusive

The Second Chilling Installment in the Horror Masterpiece

MERMAID FOREST

Partake of the mermaid's flesh, the legend says, and you'll live forever. But what happens when you don't want to be immortal anymore? Mermaid Forest is a uniquely macabre tale from manga wunderkind **Rumiko Takahashi**. Another ANIMERICA exclusive

PLUS...

The Latest News from Japan and America
Reviews of the Hottest Subtitled and Dubbed Anime Titles
New Developments in the World of Manga
Results of our Readers' Poll and...
Much, Much More!

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